

HUGH MOORE



A
NOVEL



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H U G H M O O R E .

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A NOVEL

BY

EVELYN STONE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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HUGH MOORE.



CHAPTER I.

“ They came into a land
In which it seemèd always afternoon,
And round the coast the languid air did swoon.”

6 Nov 51
Rev. Ray
Lectar = 2v

It was a golden evening in Corfu ; summer still lingered there, though already in England it had given place to chilly autumn, with its dropping leaves. The sunset was just over, and the Albanian mountains were resplendent with its passing glow—resplendent with such depth and intensity of colour as we dwellers in the North find it difficult to imagine,—while at the foot of the hills

the sea was dyed crimson with a vivid reflection of the glory above ; but the splendour lasted only a few minutes,—all too swiftly it faded, and a soft grey veil fell over the scene.

Then the lights began to twinkle here and there in the ships lying at anchor in the little harbour, and in the houses that climbed the hill and clustered on the edge of the cliff. A picturesque little town it is, especially when the evening mists veil its more modern buildings, and you only see the general outline, with its pretty grouping of roofs against the deep, clear Southern sky.

A small English schooner was lying at anchor not far from the quarantine island : a slight swell rolling in from the open sea caused the yacht to swing a little from side to side, but so gently and evenly that you would hardly have noticed the movement, unless you had watched the masts rising and

falling against the horizon-line. Her ensign and burgee were hauled down for the night, and on board all was very quiet—three or four sailors gathered together in a little group at the bow, apparently half asleep over their pipes, and almost the only sound the lap, lap of the water against the bulwarks.

Presently, however, the silence was broken by the voices and footsteps of two men who were pacing the deck together, and talking in rather low tones, as they glanced from time to time at the fast-dying glory on the hills. Both young, and both good specimens of Englishmen, they were yet different enough to exemplify the saying, that a man's friend must never be too like himself. Jack Ward, the elder of the two by a few months, was the owner of the yacht, and having been smitten with a desire to go pig-sticking in Albania, had invited his friend to spend a

two months' leave with him on the shores of the Adriatic.

They had been boys together at Eton, and though, when Ward went to college, Hugh Moore entered the army, they had never lost sight of each other; and Moore, in accepting Jack's invitation, promised himself, over and above the pleasure of pig-sticking, the enjoyment of renewed intercourse with his friend, on the old familiar footing of Eton days.

Just now, however, there appeared to be a little disagreement of some sort between them, for Ward's voice had a touch of remonstrance in it as he said, "I hope you will be careful, don't you know, Moore. It does not do for a fellow to be too—too——"

"What's up now, Jack?" said the other, good-humouredly. He was accustomed to be told that he must be "careful," and it is to be feared that the caution did not make much

impression on him. The word hardly agreed with his Hibernian temperament, for though I have spoken of him as English, he was in reality a thorough Irishman, descended from some old Celtic king, as any Moore of Glengarn would tell you. The savage blood had been tempered by plentiful infusions from the sister isle, but the careless light-heartedness—recklessness, his enemies (had he had any) would perhaps have called it—was there still, and often aroused the surprise, and even indignation, of the more methodical Englishman.

Ward did not answer for a moment, and then he said, much embarrassed to explain himself more fully, and rather annoyed that Hugh did not, or would not, understand—

“Well, you know—for a fellow to pay a lot of attention to a girl, and then to back out of it, isn’t quite the right sort of thing.”

“Oh indeed!” said Moore, with a charm-

ing expression of innocence, pulling serenely at the end of his close-clipped moustache. "This is very interesting from Mr Jack Ward, who has been doing the same all his life. But pray what are you referring to now?"

"Oh, if you pretend not to know, it's no use my talking. I knew it was never any good to say anything to you; but I thought I had better either warn you or Miss Wilson. Perhaps I shall have a chance of speaking to her to-night."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Moore, flushing a little. He was fair, and the colour mounted easily to his forehead. "That's rather too much of a good thing. I leave you to your affairs—you leave me to mine."

"All right; and you will be involved in an engagement before you know where you are."

"An engagement! Fiddlesticks! It is absurd to make so much of it."

“It may be fun for you, but death to the poor little girl, that’s all. Remember she does not go through London seasons perpetually, as you do; and she sees so few people that she mayn’t understand your——”

“You are very incoherent and illogical,” said Moore, with a little heat: “one minute you accuse me of shabbily backing out, and the next warn me against engaging myself,—and all because I have paid a little attention to the only pretty girl in the place.”

“Oh, I don’t think any serious harm is done yet. I only want you to take care; and don’t be too attentive to-night.”

“To-night! Pooh! What chance has one at a little stuffy dinner-party? By the by, it is time to dress. Put your mind at ease, Ward.”

The two men clattered down the steep little ladder that led to their sleeping-berths,

and presently, dressed in faultless evening attire, were being rapidly rowed to the landing-place, in the yacht's smart little gig.

A short but dusty climb brought them up the hill to the stone-paved street where the British Consulate was situated—for thither they were bound.

They were both silent, but Ward's thoughts reverted to the conversation they had been holding together. Five weeks of Moore's two months were already over, and, during the last part of the time especially, his amusements had been diversified by a rather marked flirtation with the Consul's pretty daughter. "Was it only flirtation?" mused Jack, as he and his friend mounted the flight of stone steps which led to the Consul's abode. He felt uneasy. Suppose Moore should really become entangled in this affair, how should he, Jack Ward, ever be able to meet old Lord Glengarn again? True, Hugh was

but a younger son, and his father only a poor Irish Viscount; but, as every one knows, pride generally goes hand in hand with poverty, and to mix the blood of the Moores with that of a Levantine Consul's daughter (pretty though she might be), would be too great a shock for his lordship's susceptibilities to stand for a moment. And as to Lady Glengarn! Ward's hair stood on end at the very thought of what she would say. She was always rather a freezing personage, at least in his estimation; but his blood ran cold as he fancied her eyes fixed upon him with a searching and reproachful gaze, and himself arraigned before her tribunal, while she harangued him in some such words as these: "You took Hugh to Corfu. Why did you let him linger there, when you saw the danger? I consider you responsible for all this trouble. Never set foot in my house again."

Yes ; he would certainly be the scapegoat if Hugh got into a scrape. And then, farewell to all future hopes of pleasant shooting at Glengarn Castle—of wild gallops over the moors, or wilder dances with fascinating Irish girls !

Then there was another thought. It was really very stupid of Hugh to go and flirt like this with Miss Wilson, when he might amuse himself as much as he chose at home ; and there could be no *serious* intentions in this case. Jack Ward hardly allowed it to himself, and yet he secretly felt that it was scarcely fair of Hugh to engross all the interest, and throw him so entirely into the shade. No doubt, Clara was a very pretty girl, and very charming ; and if it had been Jack who had chosen to pay her attention, it would not have mattered so much, for he was his own master, and if he liked to throw himself away (supposing it *was* throw-

ing himself away) on a girl who was half Greek, and the other half hardly English,—why, there was no one who had any right to object.

His gloomy musings were interrupted by the Consul's greeting.

What was the Consul like? It is difficult to give an idea of a Levantine Consul unless you happen to have seen one. He considers himself English, but he is very un-English looking; he probably wears a very green pot-hat, a large white shirt with black studs and many stains, a waistcoat and black coat much the worse for wear, and a seedy pair of boots with elastic sides. His hair is somewhat long and uncombed; his moustache and beard sorely want trimming; the scent of tobacco is never absent from his person, nor the mark of the habitual pipe from his fingers. He is always exceedingly amiable to the casual British traveller; really anxious to be

of service, without counting the cost ; and he usually is a man of keen vision, taking in everything that is going on around him, either in the political or social world. He is, moreover, something of a cosmopolite, with relations all over the Levant, has probably married a foreigner, and speaks several languages as fluently as his own, if not better. He is, in short, a man whose peculiarities strike one at once, but whose good qualities take longer to discover.

Mr Wilson was no exception to the generality of consuls, without being of an exaggerated type. He had married a lovely Greek from Asia Minor, and his daughter Clara inherited her beauty, which was of an un-English type, but none the less fascinating on that account to a susceptible young Irishman, who was never quite happy without some woman to adore.

She was, moreover, the only girl in the

place with any pretensions to beauty, and she always took great pains to make herself agreeable to any casual visitors who came to Corfu, and who generally had some business to transact with her father.

CHAPTER II.

" Let the luscious south wind
 Breathe in lovers' sighs
 While the lazy gallants
 Bask in ladies' eyes.
 What does he but soften
 Heart alike and pen ?
 Tis the hard grey weather
 Breeds hard Englishmen.

But the black north-easter
 Through the snow-storms hurled,
 Drives our English hearts of oak
 Seaward round the world.
 Come ! and strong within us
 Stir the Vikings' blood,
 Bracing vein and sinew—
 Blow, thou wind of God."

THE Consul's room was large and airy, and furnished in semi-Eastern, semi-European style, which was very attractive in hot weather. When Moore and Ward arrived, there were already several other guests assembled—one or two other consuls with their

wives, and two or three strangers, besides the English chaplain and his daughter. Hugh was placed next the young hostess, who, as her mother had been dead for some years, was well used to take the top of her father's table.

"We have just had some news, Mr Moore," she said, turning to him at once, and disregarding the remarks of an elderly consul on her left. "Can you think what it is?"

She spoke with a slightly foreign accent, and Hugh thought he had never seen her look so pretty.

"What is it?" he asked.

"The Royal Britain is coming in," she answered, "and that is a grand event at Corfu."

"You often see ships. Have you any friends in this one?"

"No: we don't often have such a large one in; but it will be here to-morrow, they say, or next day."

“Your tennis-party won’t come off, then?” he said, rather jealously.

“And why not?” asked Clara, smiling.
“Will you not come, then?”

“I come? Need you ask that? But you will be watching for the ship, or something.” He ended rather lamely, for he was looking at her eyes, which shone so brightly just then.

“We shall have plenty of occasions to see the ship,” pursued Clara. “I like going on ships—when they are not moving.”

“You are not fond of the sea?” he asked, thinking her language was not nautical; and then making haste to add, “I am horribly sea-sick too, sometimes. But have you never been a long voyage?”

“I have been about a good deal. I was born at Smyrna, you know; and we have been to Broussa, and Alexandria, and Salonika; and at last we came here, three years ago.”

“And you like this place?”

“Oh yes, but not so much as if we English had it still.”

It sounded strange to Hugh to hear her talk of “we English,” for she always seemed to him so completely a foreigner, although she spoke English easily, and did not use many foreign idioms. And so they chatted on. She told him (not for the first time) of her life, and her strange experiences—as they seemed to him—and he made her laugh with stories of his boyhood, of his Irish home, and his pranks in barracks, till attention was drawn to their end of the table, and conversation became more general.

The tennis-party engagement was faithfully kept. Although the game had not as yet taken in Corfu that place as an everyday pastime which it holds in England, Miss Wilson had managed to collect together a fair number of comparatively good players,

Hugh and Jack being naturally enough the champions. Games had gone on in constant succession till nearly sunset, when the play was unexpectedly interrupted by an untoward incident.

Miss Wilson was watching the game, seated in an easy-chair at the edge of the court, her red sunshade making a picturesque contrast to her white gown. It was a pretty picture, and it is pardonable to suppose that Hugh's attention was divided between Clara and the play, for a ball shot past him unexpectedly, and in making a sudden effort to get back to it, he startled every one by falling flat on his back at Miss Wilson's feet. There was a general laugh, for his position was sufficiently ludicrous; and as he did not rise at once, there were one or two attempts at "chaff." But to poor Hugh himself it was no laughing matter. It was not the first time in his life that he had

put his knee out of joint, and the sharp pain when he tried to rise made him realise only too surely what had happened.

Of course the game was suspended, and they all crowded round him with advice and condolences ; but the only person he saw was Clara, looking very pale, and with tears in her eyes. In a minute or two he was able to put a brave face on the whole business, and make as light of it as possible, assuring them all that he was well accustomed to such an accident ; but he could not help remarking to Ward, as he was helped into his coat : “ I tell you what it is, my friend—I shan’t be able to go pig-sticking with you the next few days. I must keep this leg quiet a bit, I know. It’s a horrid bore, but it can’t be helped ; and you had better get me to the hotel as quick as you can.”

So to the hotel he was carried, Jack declaring he would give up his pig-

sticking and stay to nurse his friend. Hugh, however, would not hear of it; and when the doctor pronounced that a few days' rest was all that was necessary, Ward consented to go off the next morning, protesting all the time against his own selfishness, and feeling some compunction at leaving his friend to the undivided assaults of the fair Clara. He knew better, however, than to touch upon a subject that had once been so pointedly dropped, and trusted to luck that no very desperate catastrophe would happen in his absence.

But what is a man to do, cast upon his own resources in a little hotel, and unable to stir outside for more than a week? Can he fail to be grateful for any distractions? and if they come in the shape of a pretty girl, is he to be blamed? Jack was away, and Miss Wilson and her father took pity on Hugh. She never came alone; but they would

bring him books and papers, or her father would smoke, while she and Hugh chatted. Moore never committed himself—in fact, he did not consider that he was in love; but sometimes he could not help asking himself whether their easy footing of friendship might be supposed to mean anything more than he intended. If Jack had not warned him, he might have gone on without thinking, and even now he only half believed that Miss Wilson was the little girl—quite innocent of flirtation—that his friend had represented her to be. Moreover, Hugh himself was on such excellent terms of intimacy with so many women of all ages, married and unmarried. He possessed the Irish inheritance of an irresistibly fascinating manner,—half humorous, half caressing,—and he never lived in any house for a week without seeming, and feeling, as if he had known the inmates thereof

all his life. In this case, there was no second woman to divide his interest and attention, and bright-eyed Clara had it all to herself.

One day, however, he received a visit from one of the lieutenants of H.M.S. Royal Britain, which had entered the harbour the day after his accident. The card was handed to him as he was lounging near the window with his head half out, watching the goings-on in the big square below,—a few soldiers in their white fustinellas being drilled ; people passing up and down the street, or crossing the square towards the open-air stalls on the opposite side ; and the bright sunlight making it all look Southern and picturesque. Now that he was confined to the house, he spent a long time gazing out of window in true Greek fashion. He had noticed a smart, naval-looking man enter the hotel, but had never thought of him as a visitor to himself ;

but the name, "Lieutenant Charles Drake," made him start forward, limping towards the door, exclaiming heartily : "Well, it was good of you to climb all those stairs to find me."

"I am sorry to find you laid up," said Drake. "I heard of you from old Wilson, and thought you must be awfully dull."

"I shall soon be about again now," Hugh answered. "I did not know you were on board the Royal Britain."

"I have only been on board her a few months, and I am going next month to my uncle's at Eastport,—Sir Edward Nevill, you know. His flag-lieutenant has just got his promotion, and he has asked me if I will fill his place."

"A capital thing, I suppose?"

"Oh, an awfully jolly berth after one has been abroad a good bit! Why, I haven't been at home for eight years, except for a month or two. The last time was three

years ago, when I met you. I was transferred last May from the Gadfly; but if I had known I should get this appointment, I should have come home then. You are better off for leave in the army."

"Everything is beastly now," said Hugh. "Army's going to the dogs—isn't such a thing, in fact; Radicals spoil everything. I am bound to be a Tory, you see, for we get next to no rents now; and as far as I can see, my brother'll be a beggar long before he gets into the property."

"And has no one taken compassion on you since you have been laid up?"

"Oh yes; Mr Wilson and his daughter have been very good-natured, and often come all this long way up to see me."

Drake laughed.

"Aha! I can fancy little Miss Clara dragging the old gentleman about! So she has been making up to you?"

“What do you mean? Do you know her?”

“*Rather!* and she has a considerable reputation all over these parts! Why, I believe she has been engaged two or three times already—at least they say so.”

Now it was no doubt very unreasonable of Hugh to feel angry. Strictly speaking, he ought to have felt relieved; for if she were such a consummate flirt, of course his conscience might be proportionably clear. However, he did feel angry. Was it that he was harder hit than he supposed? or was it only that his chivalric nature was roused by any innuendos against a woman's character?

“Oh, I daresay they say so,” he said; “and, you know, a naval man is uncommonly easy to catch,—so we always say in our service;” after which savage hit he felt better, and they both dropped the subject.

A day or two after, some of the officers of the *Royal Britain* organised a picnic to

Paleocastrizza; and Hugh considered himself sufficiently recovered to join the party, as hardly any walking was necessary.

He had been thinking a great deal of what Mr Drake had said to him, and came to the conclusion that there was probably a certain amount of truth in it; but that if it were so, it was only an additional reason not to disturb his pleasant understanding with Miss Wilson by any abrupt change of manner—especially as his leave was drawing to an end, and he would soon be out of reach of her fascinations.

Accordingly, by a little judicious manœuvring, he easily contrived to get into the same carriage with Miss Wilson and her father, who were, of course, of the party. She made him sit beside her, and kept the fourth seat empty, so that he could rest his leg if he wished—a precaution not altogether unnecessary, as the drive was a long one.

For the first part of the time the Consul was very talkative, and Clara held her peace—for none of her father's subjects of conversation had any interest for her. Commerce she naturally knew nothing about, and of politics scarcely more; while of history she had only the vaguest possible notion, and her own travels were about the limit of her geographical information. She talked Italian and modern Greek easily, and was more or less at home in colloquial French; but on all general subjects her views were decidedly limited.

However, as a rule men prefer girls who are the reverse of intellectual; and a charmingly simple confession of ignorance often bewitches, when a suspicion of learning, even without display, does but alarm. So men always liked Clara; and she herself was a thorough little coquette, enjoying their admiration, while keeping her heart whole.

It must be confessed that this time she had met her match. Hugh attracted her very much. His Irishness amused her, his chivalrous devotion touched the best part of her nature, and her womanhood, for the first time perhaps, asserted itself. She determined to risk everything and win him.

That long drive was a charming opportunity for exercising her powers of fascination, and of that art she was an accomplished mistress. After her father had settled himself comfortably to doze, with a never-ceasing supply of cigarettes, she began to talk, and there was a less self-conscious ring in her voice than usual.

“Your time here will soon be up, Mr Moore,” she said, with a pretty little sigh and a half-shy glance at him under her eyelashes.

“Yes, indeed, alas ! I shall feel just like a naughty boy going back to his lessons.”

“Why a *naughty* boy?”

“Ah! you don’t know what it is to be naughty, Miss Wilson. As for me, I am always in scrapes. I never have any ready money, for one thing.”

“And what do you do then?” she asked, innocently.

“What can a man do but beg, borrow, or steal? I am a great adept at all three, but chiefly at stealing,” he said, with a careless laugh. “It is awfully hard that an elder brother should have all the tin. (Don’t whisper to any one that I said so!) Not that there’s much in our family at all.”

“Ah!” said Clara, looking puzzled; “and tin is so important then?”

“Money, I should have said,” laughed Hugh. “You are a capital mentor, Miss Wilson; you don’t understand slang. English girls are as great at it now as we men.”

“I would try to learn if you would teach me,” said Clara meekly, at which Hugh laughed more than ever, told her she was much better without such naughty learning, and tried in vain to draw her out a little on the ideal woman. She preferred to go back to the old subject, and told him his departure would make the little Corfu society quite dull.

“Not now you have got the Royal Britains,” he replied. “You will forget all about me in a week.”

This was getting rather near dangerous ground, and so she felt, as she answered rather tremulously—

“What do you take me for?”

Perhaps he was somewhat startled at the very personal nature of her remarks, for he made no reply; and finding the pause growing awkward, she said—

“I am afraid your accident has spoilt your

stay here ; and I feel rather guilty, for I was the cause."

"Oh no!" he cried, warmly. "I should have done it anywhere. It *was* a bore," — here his honesty overcame him, — "an awful bore, to lose a week or more of sport in that way ; but I have to thank you for making my captivity so pleasant. By the by, Miss Wilson, did you not tell me you had no friends in the Royal Britain? Drake said the other day he had the pleasure of knowing you. Perhaps you don't count him as a friend? I think he seems a nice fellow."

"Oh yes," said Clara, who never spoke against any one, and never contradicted any remark that was made to her; "I don't think he knows me very well."

"Some people never know any one well. Now I am one of those lucky creatures who always seem to, I don't know why. I sup-

pose it's a happy Hibernian temperament. Irish are always favourites, you know, specially in Parliament. They impart a flavour to its proceedings, just as olives do to a dinner. I say, what splendid old fellows these olives are!"

They were passing through a grove of hoary trees, gnarled and twisted, as only an olive-tree can be—sometimes with quite hollow trunks, sometimes fantastically distorted in shape, but always with the soft grey-green foliage, which never changes in winter or summer, youth or old age.

Now at last they began the descent towards the sea, and here the road was very rough, and even dangerous in parts, for the Corfiotes have little interest in keeping up the roads for driving, in the more distant parts of their island. They use mules and donkeys themselves, which take them along quite fast enough. They like to sit sideways on the

animal, and walk slowly enough to play at cards with a friend who is bound for the same village. It is the great excitement of their life, this card-playing, and they can do it quite as well on the backs of their quiet, sure-footed beasts, as in a little jolting cart without springs. Why, then, should they pay to keep up roads for the benefit of strangers? Accordingly they do not, and both roads and bridges fall into bad repair.

There had been a landslip not far from Paleocastrizza, and this had broken away portions of a bridge which spanned a narrow but rather deep ravine. Here the carriages unladed their burden for greater safety, and Clara insisted on her father giving Hugh his arm, in case of any awkward bit of road. He would much rather have been left alone, but thought it was very sweet and considerate of Clara to provide a support for him. He felt furiously jealous for the moment of

Drake, who walked on the outside of Miss Wilson, and began to engross her completely.

She wandered down to the beach with the rest of the party, but Hugh was forced to get into the carriage again, and sat there gnawing at his moustache in silent disgust, listening to the voices of the others, and distinguishing hers from the rest. A turn of the road brought him into view of the monastery of Paleocastrizza, with the little cove at its foot, lapped by the waves of the Ionian Sea. Such a sea! No resistless, all-devouring monster did it seem that morning, as each little ripple flowed gently in, and broke almost without a sound on the white shining beach. A glorious blazing sun over everything,—spreading a delicious sense of drowsy laziness,—almost lulling pain and strife to sleep, one would have thought, did one not know that it burns into the veins of

these Southerners, filling them oftentimes with a madness that we men of the North can hardly realise.

And we fall victims to that madness, as to their climate, and yet believe that the laws and customs of England are made for all the world !

I do not know whether Hugh's musings took exactly this form, as he lay full length on the pebbly beach, and watched the ceaseless ebb and flow of the tiny waves ; but he was conscious, at any rate, of a vague sense of difference, not only between Aldershot and Corfu,—which, after all, is but a commonplace,—but also between himself and Clara Wilson : a difference not enough to disturb him, because he did not think seriously enough of her for that, but enough to lend a little additional piquancy to a day-dream of his ideal wife—a day-dream he did not indulge in very often, but which floated

before him now and then, and might some day take tangible form.

She must be pretty, of course—not necessarily beautiful, but at least elegant and graceful ; perhaps a little gracious dignity would be well. And she must be very religious and good. Hugh felt that he himself was somewhat deficient on that score ; for while all his sympathies were on the right side, he had no very strong feelings or principles, and rather agreed with the Frenchman who thought wives were bound to do their husbands' religion for them as well as their own. A certain latitude, both in faith and practice, might be allowed to men—nay, was their due—but a woman was “ horrid ” if not religious. And she must be well-born and well-bred, and, alas ! she must be rich. Hugh hated this last proviso with all his heart, but how could he help it ? A younger son, brought up (to say the least) without economical

habits, he was perhaps hardly to blame if he found his small allowance and his pay together insufficient for his wants. He was generous and open-handed, never accustomed to count his change ; and if he were in debt already, what would he be with a wife ? His debts were not very bad ; he had no doubt his father would pay them, when he had the courage to ask him, and he was annoyed, rather than ashamed, at having to do so ; but the idea of thrusting a penniless daughter-in-law on his parent's generosity never once crossed his mind. No, the bride must wait till his ship came home. Hark ! there is the rest of the picnic party winding down the hill—there is Clara still—no, she isn't—yes, she is—talking to that fellow Drake. What does she mean by it ? Not her friend ! He will be, by this evening, then.

CHAPTER III.

“ Yet remember, 'midst your wooing,
Love has bliss, but Love has ruing ;
Other smiles may make you fickle,—
Tears for other charms may trickle.”

THE picnic was a great success. So every one said. The lunch was excellent, of course, and under the shade of the cliffs, with the dancing waters of the little bay before them, was doubly delicious. Of course there were a great many exclamations at the beauty of the spot, and a great many comparisons with other bays in different parts of the world. One lady said it was just like Devonshire ; and Hugh, who was in a contradictory mood just then, declared that Bantry Bay beat it

hollow. He was very patriotic, and refused to believe that “ould Oireland” could be surpassed in any particular.

“At least you never get such lights,” said one incautious female — “nothing like the sunset colours.”

“Sure and ye do,” he replied, speaking for the nonce with a rich, rolling brogue. “I’d like to see the coast which was better lighted than the coast of Ireland; and as for colour, where could ye beat the colour in a good Corrk farmer’s face when he is rriding back from market?”

“With plenty of whisky inside him?” suggested Drake.

“Sure it is so,” said Hugh, at which they all laughed.

After lunch every one wanted to climb the hill to the monastery. A few picturesquely dirty monks, with handsome faces and flowing beards, had been wandering about, gazing

from a little distance on the merry party, and perhaps longing for a share in the good things ; and now they followed them, and let them go wherever they pleased, but did not offer to guide them into the recesses of the monastery. Hugh was left quite alone. Even the coachmen had gone fast asleep. The silence was intense—as unbroken as it can be by the sea ; but it did not last long. In a few minutes Clara Wilson found out that it was very hot, and that climbing a hill was tiring ; so she slipped behind, and running back to the beach, seated herself a little in front of Hugh, on the left. He was gazing out to sea, and so occupied with his thoughts that he did not see her at first ; but a little rustle of her dress startled him out of his reverie, and he hobbled up to her ; while she turned round and exclaimed—

“ Oh, Mr Moore ! are you here ? ”

The little monkey knew perfectly well

where he was, and had taken her steps accordingly.

“Did you not expect to find me here?” said Hugh, who secretly suspected she had done it on purpose. “Shall I go away? Did you want to be alone?”

“I hate solitude; please stay,” she answered, with a bewitching glance of her black eyes. “I came down because it is so hot and tiring going up the hill, and there is nothing to do but to see a lot of dirty monks.”

“The monks don’t interest you as they do the ladies fresh from England. I have heard people very sentimental over their splendid eyes and their picturesque clothes.”

“Do you admire them?” she asked, always anxious to make everything a personal matter.

“Honestly, no. But I should like awfully to climb the hill and see the view. This leg

of mine is rapidly getting intolerable. I think I shall have it off and get a wooden one."

Clara's genuine look of horror made him laugh, and he was obliged to assure her that he did not seriously intend to do so, and that in a few days more it would be quite strong again; and then he gave her a decided hint that he would like to know the subject of her long conversation with Mr Drake. She told him willingly: "He was talking about his sister. They are orphans. She lives with his uncle, Sir Edward Nevill, at Eastport."

"Where he is going to be flag-lieutenant?"

"Yes; and he told me about his uncle and aunt, and his cousin."

"Oh! what cousin?"

"Miss Nevill. The only child she is, he says, and almost like his sister."

"Oh! I suppose so. You know what that means, generally?"

“That they will marry?”

“Ten to one. Do you ever take bets, Miss Wilson?”

“Whenever any one wants to,” she replied.
“What do you want to bet?”

“A pair of gloves to you if Drake doesn’t marry his cousin within six months.”

“Very well. But you will forget. How will you send them?”

“Oh, I’ll manage that; perhaps I’ll bring them, who knows? But it aint likely I’ll get leave again so soon to get as far as this. Here!”—picking a little flower off the cliff—“take this, and send it to me if I forget.”

Clara blushed a rich red through her dark skin as she took the little token; and Hugh suddenly saw that what he had done quite thoughtlessly, might be supposed to have an utterly different interpretation, and he inwardly cursed his folly. It was no use ex-

plaining it away. He only hoped she would forget.

Certainly one cause of Clara's attractiveness was the interest—not put on, but quite genuine, if not very deep—she took in the personal concerns of any one whom she came across. It was not exactly curiosity—for the inquisitiveness of a Yankee is never attractive. It was rather a sort of sympathy which worked upon that subtle vanity, or love of self, we almost all possess, and men more than women. Like most girls, Miss Wilson took more interest in men than in her own sex; therefore her sympathy for the former was more lively, and they generally took her into their confidence very soon. A man is usually more interested in talking about himself than about any other subject, unless he happens to be extraordinarily modest, or uncommonly proud and reserved; and as Hugh was neither particularly one thing nor

the other, it did not require much manipulation on Clara's part to direct the conversation into, what was to her, the most interesting groove. He had not a very high opinion of himself, but neither was he much ashamed of his faults; and he was proud of his family, which was an old if not a rich one, and being fond of talking, liked to have a sympathetic listener to all his stories.

Drake was more on his guard, but all the same she had extracted a good deal of information from him.

The *tête-à-tête* on the beach was interrupted by Clara's father, who came towards them looking rather black, and saying he had missed his daughter, and had been hunting everywhere for her. He was very hot, and as he stood before them mopping his face with his handkerchief, Hugh was suddenly struck with the full ludicrousness of introducing this man to his parents as his father-

in-law. There were limits to every human power of endurance, and Hugh felt instinctively that this would surpass his.

Clara blushed more than ever, and seemed conscious of what he must be feeling; but an explosion from the Consul was so evidently on the verge of taking place, that Hugh hastened to move off to join some of the stragglers of the party, who had also found exploring the monastery a warm proceeding—and indeed he was not sorry of an excuse for leaving Miss Wilson. He avoided her for the rest of the day, and was apparently in the highest spirits during the drive home, keeping Drake and another of the Royal Britain's officers in constant peals of laughter.

The evening was as exquisite as the rest of the day had been, and the shade of the olive-groves was welcome. As they neared Corfu, and came out on the open tract, they passed the country carts laden with purple grapes,

and led by peasants in their picturesque costumes, who were lounging along on their way back from the town to the villages where they lived. The rich sunset light was over everything, and once more the Albanian hills reflected the crimson glow in marvellously vivid shades—San Salvador standing out, a rapidly darkening mass, clearly defined against the evening sky.

Hugh brought two of the officers back to his hotel to supper—unconsciously, perhaps, wishing to put off the moment when he must reckon up the day's accounts. He had placed himself in an awkward fix. Did Clara really care for him? and if so, was it his duty, or, to speak more correctly, did his honour bind him, not to draw back? And yet he could not help feeling she had drawn him on, and made him go further than he intended. Had it been only herself who was involved, he would not have minded so much, or rather

his hesitation would have been more easily disposed of, for he admired her very heartily, and liked to feel he had the power of always bringing that pretty smile to her lips, and the light into her dark eyes. But there was her father—and he *was* a hard morsel to swallow. For a long time he sat, brooding over his pipe, without coming to any conclusion; and his sleep was tormented with restless dreams, so that he blessed the returning daylight. He was still young, and by no means inclined to the art of lady-killer.

Meanwhile, Clara had had a very bad time of it with her father. He had given her a strong hint of his displeasure on the beach, and her heart was sore when she looked round for Moore's support and found he had basely deserted her. During the drive home the Consul was obliged to conceal his feelings, though Clara sat inwardly quaking; but as soon as they reached home, he motioned her

into the room, and closing the door with a bang, said—

“Now, Clara, give an account of yourself.”

She resolved to profess perfect innocence, and answered meekly, “What do you mean?” but her face was in a flame directly.

“*Mean?* You know perfectly well what I mean—and I’ll tell you,—that I won’t have you throw yourself at that boy’s head any longer.”

“Oh, papa!” said Clara, with a rising sob; “how can you say such horrid things? I’m sure I would not throw myself at his or at anybody’s head for anything!”

“I daresay!” said Wilson, with a scornful little laugh. “Now look here, once for all—I *won’t have* it. I consider I allow you more than enough liberty—a great deal more than your mother had, I can assure you; and I won’t have that young fellow go home and laugh at you—and me—with all his grand

friends, and say I wanted you to marry him, and he only just escaped in time. Bah! you know the sort of things he would say."

"I am sure I don't," cried Clara, bursting into tears. "I don't know what I have done to make you so unjust and unkind—and I am sure Mr Moore would behave like a gentleman."

"You know nothing about it," said her father, angrily. "I shall behave like a gentleman too, and forbid you to speak to him again."

"Oh, papa! papa!" cried Clara, too frightened now for tears, and trying to speak calmly; "don't say that. I will be very careful, indeed I will; and Mr Moore will be only here a little longer, and—and I think he does care for me."

"Care for you? Do you mean he has proposed to you?"

"No, not that," said Clara, blushing vio-

lently again ; “ but I should not be surprised if perhaps—he did : he gave me a flower to-day.”

“ I daresay he did,” said the Consul, bitterly ; “ and an old fool I have been to let him hang about so long, or let you hang about him, which is perhaps nearer the mark.”

Clara shook, between wrath and fear.

“ But, once for all, if he should do such a thing, you are to say *No*. Do you understand ? ”

She was utterly astonished, for she had always supposed that her father would have been pleased at such an alliance, and she gasped out, “ Why ? ” all the colour fading from her cheeks as she spoke.

Her sudden change seemed to strike the Consul, for he looked at her silently for a minute, and lit his pipe before answering ; and then he spoke more quietly—

“ You don’t understand these things, Clara :

and you think, because his father is Lord Somebody, and his uncle Lord Somebody else, that he has any amount of money, and all that; but you are quite mistaken. I have made inquiries, and find that Mr Moore has very little money at all, besides his pay as an officer, which is, as you must know, very small indeed,—that he is already in debt,—that he is extravagant, and has expensive tastes,—in short, that if he marries a girl without means of her own, both his wife and himself will be miserable. You know perfectly well that I have nothing to give you—nothing, that is, which would be of any use in a case of this sort. Moreover, his friends and relations would never approve of such a match, and would make it most unpleasant for you. His father would cut him off with a shilling, and you would come back to me with a large family to support in my old age, when I shall be past work,

and when your husband had got tired of you."

Clara was quite practical enough to see that the money question presented serious difficulties. In her heart of hearts she felt sure that, once in Ireland as Mrs Hugh Moore, she would have little trouble in making her way with Lord and Lady Glogarn; but she durst not say so to her father in his present mood. If Hugh really cared for her, she felt that together they might brave the anger of their respective parents. But when her father went on to say—

"There's that fellow Ward, now—if you had taken to him, I should have had nothing to say against it. He has a nice little property of his own, and he is independent, and could marry you if he chose without asking anybody's leave"—

Then poor Clara cried, "Mr Ward! Why, he has hardly spoken to me! How could I

take to him when he always kept out of my way, and Mr Moore was so very nice?"

"Always the way," muttered Wilson. "The ones that have money are too cunning!"

He was not usually harsh to his daughter, but he was thoroughly provoked this time, and the feeling that he was partly to blame did not tend to improve his temper; and as for her, after being used to a certain amount of petting and spoiling, and Hugh's pretty manners and punctilious courtesy, her father's harshness seemed all the harder to bear. It was like being brought suddenly from the Equator to the Arctic regions: the change made her shiver. She felt too broken-hearted to continue the discussion; and giving her father a duty-kiss, she went to her own room, where she threw herself on the bed, and sobbed passionately till she could sob no more. It was her first real

grief—and how bitter, needs not to say. Surely many of us remember that first despairing sense of trouble. The world is dark—the sun has set, never to rise again. We almost expect to wake next morning and find our “hair grown white in a single night;” but somehow its colour remains unchanged, and the sun does rise after all. It is not a first passionate grief that kills. Moreover, Clara’s despair was not absolute. She had a little lingering hope that Moore would dare anything, and would come to claim her; and, hugging this hope to her heart, she fell asleep at last.

The old Consul was almost more to be pitied than his daughter. He wished his wife were alive. He wished he had had no daughter. He wished that marriages were all arranged *à la Française*. He wished Moore had never come near the place. He repented his folly and short-sightedness in

letting them see so much of each other ; but he none the less held firm to his resolve on no account whatever to sanction their marriage.

When Hugh got up the following morning, after his restless night, he found a letter awaiting him containing a somewhat startling piece of news. It was from his father, enclosing the offer of the post of aide-de-camp to the General at Eastport. "I have answered it provisionally, as you were away," wrote Lord Glengarn, "but you had better telegraph a reply at once."

"This is a piece of luck," thought Hugh, "and it will give me a capital excuse for getting away at once."

He put on his hat, and strolled down to the telegraph office, where he happened to meet Drake, to whom he told his news. The latter advised him to take an Austrian Lloyd up to Trieste.

“When does the next start?” asked Hugh.

“There is one that leaves on Thursday; and that would give you time to put up your things and come to our dance to-morrow.”

“All right. Thanks, awfully. I am not good for dancing yet, but I shall like to come and see you perform; and I rather think Ward will be over, so I shall be able to make my farewell to him.”

“Did you expect this offer?”

“Not a bit. It’s a capital piece of luck; and it is curious that you and I should have met like this, and be both bound for Eastport so soon.”

“You will be there first. I am not due for a month later than I thought. The old Flag stays on a bit.”

“I expect we shall be there about the same time, then; for I must go home to my people in Ireland for a week or two, and then to Aldershot to pack up my traps,

before I begin my duties. Awful old stick, the General! I shall have to be on my good behaviour."

"Well, good-bye till to-morrow. Come early and help to entertain the natives."

"Take the old ladies down to tea, eh, if I can't dance with the young ones? There are lots of men, so I shan't be missed in the latter capacity."

Drake turned down towards the harbour, and Hugh sauntered slowly back up the shady side of the street to his hotel in the blazing square. It required some effort of will to set about the necessary preparations for his departure, few and simple though they were. There was something in the enervating atmosphere that made it peculiarly difficult to do anything at a given moment. He spent most of the afternoon on board Ward's yacht, gathering together his scattered belongings, and feeling it was

just as well to avoid a chance encounter with the Consul or the Consul's daughter before he paid them his final adieux. He had an instinctive dread of a scene, and rejoiced at the piece of good fortune that provided him with the opportunity of saying good-bye to them in public. Unconsciously, that message from England acted as a tonic upon his moral nature, and recalled him to his truer self. He did not calculate on the effect of Clara's powers of attraction when he was not in actual contact with her.

With a shrug of his shoulders he said to himself, as he stepped out of the gig on to the landing-place—"So here's an end of *dolce far niente!*"

The next afternoon was propitious for the dance, and the Royal Britain was gaily decorated for the occasion. No London ball-room can equal in attractiveness the decks of a man-of-war when cleared for dancing pur-

poses. Gaily coloured bunting formed the walls of the ball-room, banks of flowers and palms encircled the masts and filled every available corner, and many a cosy nook was to be found by those who knew the ins and outs of the ship. Drake and his fellow-officers were well rewarded for their labours.

Hugh fully intended to be punctual ; but when did an Irishman ever succeed in carrying out this laudable intention ? He was delayed in leaving the hotel ; and then the afternoon was very enticing, and he felt it was his last day in Corfu, so he strolled up the hill and looked over the little bay and the channel across to the Albanian coast, blue and hazy now in the full glare of the sun, its barren outline softened into mistiness by that wonderful light. It was a long time before he could tear himself away from the view ; and when he at last reached

the Royal Britain, he found that all the world had arrived, and dancing was in full swing.

Almost the first person he saw was Clara. She was waltzing past him; but she saw him, and a slight blush rose to her cheeks as she bowed. It was all over in a moment; but Hugh felt his own cheek grow hot, and turned away to make himself useful among the chaperons.

After conducting several old ladies to tea, he deposited the last in her place, and stood alone for a minute watching the dancers—his feet fidgeting to be off, but his leg still too weak to allow of it. Suddenly he caught Clara's eye. She was looking very pale and rather forlorn, seated all by herself in a corner; for her father, who had brought her, had (man-like) deserted her, and she did not know where he was—perhaps she did not much want to do so. It struck Hugh that

he had never before realised how lovely she was—maybe because there was less of the usual colour and sparkle about her, and more depth of expression than was generally to be found in her laughing face. Whether the pensive attitude came by nature or design, she could not have found a straighter road to her admirer's heart.

Hugh had fully made up his mind to avoid her as much as possible; but what was he to do now? The excuse of not dancing did not serve him, for she was not dancing either. He said to himself that he could not refrain from speaking to her without positive rudeness. So he made his way to her side, with the commonplace remark as he bent over her—

“You are not dancing, Miss Wilson.”

“No; I am so tired,” said Clara, plaintively, “I was obliged to rest.”

“Have you not yet recovered from the

effects of the picnic?" he asked, with rather a forced smile.

"Oh, I don't know. I have been sleeping badly;" and as she spoke she raised her dark eyes to his face almost beseechingly, and in spite of himself his heart became dangerously soft, as a mistress's does when her little dog licks the hand that beats it.

"I am a brute!" thought Hugh, and he did not resist her mute invitation to take the seat beside her. She moved further on—quite into the corner behind a palm, so that she was almost invisible from outside. There was a red flag just above, and the sun, shining through it, cast a most becoming glow over her face.

"It is so horrid not being able to sleep at night," she added, finding that he did not question her.

"Very," he answered, rather absently; for this enforced *tête-à-tête* was exactly what he

had meant to avoid. "What is the reason of it?"

"I can hardly tell you," said Clara, blushing; "it is—it is—my father was so cross with me."

"Cross with you? I should have thought that was impossible."

"Ah! you don't know him. Of course he is very nice to *you*, at least to your face."

"Well, one never knows, thank goodness, what people say of one behind one's back. It is much better not to know. I have no doubt, for instance, that your father could tell me many home truths; but I won't ask him, especially as I want to part good friends with him and with everybody."

"You are always talking of going away, but you aren't going just yet?"

"Indeed I am, Miss Wilson; I am off to-morrow morning."

She gave a great start, and her lips turned

quite white. By a strong effort she controlled herself, however, and said with tolerable calmness, though with a huskiness in her voice, "That's much sooner than you intended."

"It is indeed," said Hugh; "but I have unexpectedly been offered an aide-de-campship in England, and I must be off at once. I start in the Austrian Lloyd to-morrow for Trieste," he continued, feeling stronger after he had dealt his blow, and looking straight in front of him,—“and I came here to-day partly in hopes of seeing you and your father, and saying good-bye, and thanking you for all your kindness to me. Do you think I should find him somewhere on board?” and he made a movement as if to rise.

This summary farewell was too much for poor Clara, and for a moment she could not speak. The silence surprised Hugh, who, looking down on her, was astonished to see

her mouth quivering and her eyes full of tears. Instantly all thought of her father vanished, his good resolutions flew to the winds, and his one idea was how to comfort this poor little girl. What cruel wrong had he not done her! “Miss Wilson—Clara!” he cried, “what is the matter? Are you sorry for me to go?” and seizing her hands, he tried to look into the downcast eyes, from which large tears were dropping, while she sobbed out, “It is nothing—go away—you don’t care.”

“Don’t care! Is it possible you can think so? Only look at me. Look at me, Clara, and tell me if you are sorry for me to go?”

“How can I help it?” she said at length, with a rainbow smile, and lifting her eyes for a moment to his face. “What could you think of me if I wasn’t sorry? But oh!” she cried, suddenly disengaging her hands,

and clasping them tight together, "what would papa say if he found us? Oh dear, oh dear! what shall I do?" She was genuinely distressed, and yet never lost sight of the fact that she wished Hugh thoroughly to appreciate her position, and to understand that he was the cause of all her present grief and trouble.

"Your father!" Then, as her meaning flashed upon him—"Do you mean, my poor little Clara"—and he got possession of her hands again—"do you mean that it's owing to me he has been angry with you?"

"He was, indeed he was. Oh, I can't tell you the cruel things he said!"

"What can I do?" said Hugh, distractedly. "I will go to him and explain everything. I will go this evening, and promise you it shall be all right. Forgive me, Clara. I ought to have thought of this, fool that I

am, long ago. To think that you were suffering——” and he broke off suddenly.

“Don’t go to him—don’t speak to him,” she cried; “that would make it worse—ever so much worse. He would not hear of it. He told me not to speak to you—as if I could help it! He said you meant nothing; you mean to make fun,—oh, I can’t tell you what he said!”

“I don’t wonder he was angry—I deserve it,” said Hugh, looking with eyes full of pity at the little panting creature in front of him, and bitterly reproaching himself for his carelessness; “but when I go and explain everything, he will be ready to listen to reason. I will tell him that I did not dare to speak—that I’ve no money—that——”

“But that is just what he said,” persisted Clara; “he declared you hadn’t, and that you couldn’t afford to—to——”

“To marry ! Well, that is about the truth,” he answered, bitterly ; “we should have to wait years and years—and I *have* no right to ask that of you.”

“I would wait, indeed I would. I daresay it wouldn’t be very long,” she murmured, wistfully ; “but don’t you see that it would be no use to talk to papa ? You might as well talk to the moon—indeed you might. No one need know. I can keep a secret. Let us keep this all to ourselves.” She stopped, surprised that he did not eagerly respond—that no endearing phrase fell from his lips ; but the fact was, that her proposal was altogether repugnant to Hugh’s sense of honour—that the reaction from the excitement of the last few minutes was already beginning to set in, and the more she persisted with her insinuating suggestions, the more he felt estranged in spirit from this pretty, pleading, confiding child, whose moral sense,

he instinctively felt, was different from his own.

When he spoke, the answer sounded almost harsh to her; for he said, gently but resolutely—

“Indeed, indeed I could not do that. I must speak to your father.”

He had hardly uttered the words when the sound of voices and feet came very near; some one brushed past the palm on the outside, and there stood Mr Wilson confronting Hugh, and asking if he had seen his daughter. With ready wit, Hugh was on his feet in a moment, trusting that his own broad shoulders would effectually screen his companion until she had had time to recover herself. He shook hands cordially with the Consul,—said that he had just been coming in search of him; and when Miss Wilson emerged from her corner, it was difficult to say which was the more self-possessed of the two. But the

officers who had been with Wilson exchanged significant glances behind his back, and Hugh was not slow to note the action. Wilson was, as we have seen, a hot-tempered man, and this time he took even less pains than before to dissemble his wrath.

“I have been hunting for you high and low, Clara,” he said, ferociously scowling at her. “Come at once. It is high time to be off. Do you know you are the last on the ship?”

“Not quite, Mr Wilson,” said Hugh, coolly, “for I’m here. But I must be going too, for I am off to-morrow morning, first thing. I will follow you in a few moments, if you will allow me to call, and say good-bye.”

The Consul muttered something unintelligible; but Hugh took it as a permission, and in half an hour’s time, with many heart-searchings and a most curious mixture of sensations, he was once more mounting the

familiar steps to the Consul's house. The hints that Ward had let drop long ago, about "it's being fun for him, but death to the little girl," had never occurred to him till now in their full significance: he had gone on from day to day, thinking he would take quite sufficient care; but now Clara's face haunted him. She had looked so ill, so sad—and her eyes had appealed to the softest spot in his heart, when he had caught a glimpse of them through her tears. He could not help trying to comfort her; and if he comforted her, he must say something endearing; and if he did that, of course she thought he loved her, and wanted to marry her. So he did love her—at least he was very fond of her, and could not bear the thought of giving her pain. He had had a vague idea that his love would be something deeper and stronger than this—something that would claim his worship, as well as

appeal to his pity. But he was still very young, and the Fates seemed to have thrown this pretty girl in his way; and when she as much as told him she loved him, there was no way out of it—or so he thought. He did not consider that if he were genuinely in love, he would not wish to “get out of it” at all. However, here he was at the Consul’s door.

Wilson received him courteously, for he was far more angry with Clara than with Moore, as he had a shrewd suspicion that, if left to himself, Hugh would have done nothing more than flirt a little with her during his stay at Corfu. When he found that Hugh really wished to make a proposal for his daughter, he allowed him to hesitate and stumble over his sentences, without any of that help which a young man might expect from an old one who had gone through the same torture in his day. When at last he stopped, Wilson told him quite decidedly

that he would not hear of it,—that he did not choose his daughter should be engaged for an indefinite period, with her lover at such a distance from her; moreover, that he did not wish her to marry above her own rank, and that he did not think they were at all suited to each other.

“I’ll tell you frankly, and it may be a lesson to you,” he said,—Hugh winced, but acknowledged the shrewdness of the old man’s observation,—“you shouldn’t play with edge-tools. Clara had far more definite ideas from the beginning than you had, and she can bring most people round to her views; but she doesn’t succeed with me. And if you were to marry, you would be disappointed in her, and she probably with you, after the first month or two. I must ask you to forgive me for being frank with you, but I want you clearly to understand that I shall not alter my mind.”

“Then I can only ask you to forgive me for being the cause of any distress to your daughter,” said Hugh, with much emotion, but unable at the same time to help feeling a certain amount of resentment at the tone of superiority which the Consul adopted. “I can never forgive myself for having troubled her peace in any way.”

“As to that, she’ll get over it. And there is only one thing more I want to say to you, and that is, that I trust to your honour not to engage in any clandestine correspondence—for that I *won’t* stand. It is just the sort of thing Miss Clara would enjoy; so I give you fair warning.”

“The idea of such a thing would never have occurred to me,” said Hugh, proudly; “but I must be allowed to write her one line,—unless I may see her again?”

“Certainly not. Well, sit down and write here. I will see she has your letter; but

don't expect an answer, for I shan't allow her to write one."

Hugh sat down at the table the Consul pointed out to him, and tried to collect his thoughts—which was a difficult matter—and to say all he wanted in a few lines. Mr Wilson did not leave the room, moreover,—a thing much to be desired under the circumstances,—but sat down in an arm-chair, reading a newspaper. His presence did not certainly conduce to Hugh's peace of mind. He tore up his paper more than once into minute fragments, and at last wrote as follows :—

"Your father absolutely forbids us to meet again, and nothing will induce him to sanction our engagement. I cannot ask you to wait, my darling, with the vague hope of some day being able to offer you a position which I could ask my wife to accept; and indeed I

have told your father that the idea of a clandestine correspondence had never entered my head—I hope I have enough sense of honour for that. I can only throw myself on your mercy, and beg you to forgive me for causing you any grief. I hate myself for the thought of it, and wish you could forget me altogether; but if you can't do that, think of me as kindly as you can, and believe I never meant to do you any harm. What can I say to tell you what I feel? You can understand far better than I can write. Once more, forgive me.—Yours, H. M.”

He addressed the letter and gave it to Wilson; and as the latter extracted a formal promise from him not to write again to Clara, there was something in the young Irishman's face that brought a momentary softening to the Consul's heart.

“You will thank me some day for this

apparent cruelty," he said, wringing Hugh's hand, as he wished him farewell.

Moore could not answer, and, turning hastily, ran for the last time down the familiar flight of stone steps.

Early next morning Ward saw him off on board the Austrian Lloyd.

Hugh's heart was very heavy as he watched Corfu disappear, and yet there was a strange relief in his sensations—a cessation of responsibility when the inevitable is reached. "That episode is over," he said to himself. He had yet to learn that the chains we forge for ourselves are not so easily snapped asunder, and that the results of a course of action determine the after-events of our lives in a manner we least expect.

CHAPTER IV.

“ She walks in beauty like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
And all that’s best of dark and bright
Meets in her aspect and her eyes.”

“ MY DEAR DOROTHEA, — It was very good of you to write to me ; and pray thank my aunt for her message. It is all very well for you to talk of my being your Flag-Lieutenant, but I give you fair warning that I shall leave my work to you. I think it is lucky no other confiding Admiral has asked for my services, for my uncle knows me so well that he *can* hardly be disappointed. I revel in the thought of all the possibilities of idleness which open out before my en-

raptured gaze. I shall have time now to attend to a whole menagerie of beasts, while you and Fan write my notes for me. Think of the joy of it! specially to you, who do so love to help the over-burdened and unfortunate. As to Fan, I'm not so sure.

“Mind you make my aunt ask the General's new aide-de-camp to dinner as soon as he comes. He is a friend of mine—or rather, I met him two or three years ago in Scotland, and I have been seeing a good deal of him here, where he has been on a pig-sticking jaunt with a friend. His name is Moore, a son of old Lord Glengarn's—a regular Paddy, and such a good fellow. Look out how you talk to him, however, about Corfu. There's a certain pretty Miss Wilson here, the English Consul's daughter, and when any one has got into her clutches, it's rather hard to get out of them again. Whether Moore is in or out, I'm not pre-

pared to say; but there was a regular scene the day of our dance, and old Wilson, the father, was in a furious way—why, no one could make out, for there's no reason for thinking he would object to his daughter having an 'Honourable' tacked on to her name. Perhaps he thought Moore had no serious intentions, and, 'pon my honour, I'm not in his confidence. Moore himself went off the next day to England, but Miss Clara hints at something more than a flirtation. However, mind you see a lot of Moore, for he's a regular good one. Bother! there go eight bells, and I am on duty.

My love to Frances, and I hope she's behaving herself. I will write to my uncle in a day or two, and get him the information he wants.
—Your humble and obedient servant,

“CHARLES DRAKE.”

Dorothea Nevill looked up from her letter,

and caught the eye of her cousin Frances, who was sitting on the opposite side of the breakfast-table, and who exclaimed, "Another epistle from Charlie? Well, I never! I think he might write to me sometimes."

"Boys never care about their sisters, my dear," said her uncle drily, from behind his newspaper; and Dorothea said—

"Well, Fan, there's a message for you."

"Oh, I know what Charlie's messages are worth! You need not give yourself the trouble of repeating it."

Dorothea laughed. She was a great contrast to her cousin,—the elder by four or five years, tall and stately, with a head well set on her shoulders, and crowned with masses of chestnut hair. Her eyes were a deep shadowy blue, and her complexion had that rich glow that Romney loved to paint. Frances Drake was between sixteen and seventeen, shorter and darker than Dorothea, with

brilliant dark eyes that flashed and sparkled when she spoke, a colour that varied incessantly, and a sensitive mobile mouth,—all betokening an excitable child, as one could see at a glance. Nevertheless there was a certain resemblance between the two, especially in voice and manner, which made strangers often take them for sisters. Indeed Frances had never known any other home, for Lady Katherine had adopted her from her birth, and had lavished almost more tender care upon the little orphan than her own daughter received. Lady Mary Drake (Lady Katherine's only sister), already a four months' widow, had died at the birth of Frances—leaving her boy Charlie, also, to the guardianship of Sir Edward Nevill.

Older by a few years than Dorothea, Charlie had always stood on those pleasant cousinly terms with her which parents sometimes permit. He was almost like her own

brother, with just the additional spice of interest which cousinship supplies ; and of course there were not wanting prudent people who shook their heads over Lady Katherine's short-sightedness, and tongues wagged still louder when Mr Drake's appointment as Sir Edward's Flag-Lieutenant was known at Eastport. But gossip never reached Admiralty House ; if it did, Sir Edward's scorn of women's tongues, and Lady Katherine's easy - going good - nature, did not produce fruitful soil for its development. She was in appearance a soft, motherly little woman, with a gentle cooing voice, and hair that had once been more golden than Dorothea's, but was now turning grey. Her husband carried his sixty years lightly enough, and was as erect and alert as many a man twenty years his junior. To have no son of her own had been one of the greatest disappointments in Lady Katherine's life ; she was therefore

little loath to allow her sister's boy to usurp that vacant place in her heart, and was only too glad to fill her too silent nursery and schoolroom with companions for her solitary daughter.

She did not the least realise now that Frances, the baby of the family, was almost grown up; and the result was a dangerous amount of liberty for this spoilt child, who hovered between the drawing-room and schoolroom in a manner slightly injurious to discipline.

Charlie's letters were public property, and this one went the round of the breakfast-table, eliciting various comments on its way. Lady Katherine recalled the fact that she had known Lord Glengarn in the days of her youth, and Frances was much excited at the idea of Hugh's flirtation with the pretty Levantine. Dorothea hoped he danced well, and Sir Edward said that in his day men with

broken hearts didn't dance, but he supposed all that was altered now.

"Why a broken heart, Uncle Edward?" said Frances. "I daresay he was glad enough to get out of it;" and Hugh's broken heart became a joke in the family.

"Have you ordered the flowers for to-night, Dorothy?" asked her mother.

"No; I thought Fan and I might get some this morning. We shan't want many. There are some still in the garden."

"I wish we had a little more glass," sighed Lady Katherine; "but if you and Fan will drive into the town, I will give you a few commissions."

The breakfast-table was deserted, and the party separated—Sir Edward to the study, Frances to the schoolroom, and Lady Katherine and Dorothy to make arrangements for a dinner-party that evening.

"We must settle about the taking in and

seating — these people never know how to place themselves,” murmured her ladyship, with a little gentle scorn for the inhabitants of Eastport. “Let me see : Admiral Jenkins takes me in. Dear old man, I hope he won’t be quite so deaf as he is sometimes. And your father must have Mrs Jenkins. Who shall we put on the other side of him ? Some one who can talk.”

“Blanche Harvey,” suggested Dorothea, with a mischievous twinkle in her eye.

“Oh, my dear ! do you think it will be Blanche who will come ? I hope not. Your father will never speak to her. And who must you have ? Captain Newman, I suppose ?”

“Don’t you think he must be tired of me by this time ?”

“Well, it doesn’t seem like it. I can’t give him to Miss Harvey, for there is Colonel Brise to be provided for. Do *you* want a change ?”

“Oh no! As for me, I like him very much; only I am always afraid that the Commander of the flag-ship will see too much of the Admiral’s daughter.”

Not long after, Dorothea and her cousin were spinning along the dusty road from the dockyard to the town, in a smart little dog-cart, drawn by two bay ponies, which were well known in Eastport. Past the bare common and the brand-new pier—past the long line of houses facing the sea, where numberless nurses were drawing perambulators full of children, and invalids were dragging themselves up and down, and sunning themselves in the southern aspect—round among the dreary little villas, with their damp autumnal gardens and poor little lawns strewn with dropping leaves—out into the street of shops, where the Eastport dandies were disporting themselves, with exquisite “button-holes,” tight gloves, and large eye-

glasses, and brushing past the over-dressed girls on the narrow pavement with hardly a "Beg your pardon"—till the ponies stopped before the flower-shop. There was not a very great choice of flowers: Eastport was not the sort of place to produce any extensive demands on florists, and the supply was in consequence of a limited description; but after considerable trouble, Dorothea found more or less what she wanted, or rather had to make the best of that which was offered to her. As she turned her ponies' heads towards home, a gentleman passing by on the pavement lifted his hat, and with an almost imperceptible smile wished them good morning.

"What an unusual sight! the Commander of the flag-ship on shore in plain clothes, and at this hour of the day!"

Frances made a slight grimace as her cousin spoke, and gave a less gracious return

to the gentleman's salutation. She took the liveliest interest in every one who came to Admiralty House, and was apt to amuse and alarm her family by the unguarded expression of her likes and dislikes.

“So you're to have him again to-night, Dolly; I pity you.”

“Who? Captain Newman? You needn't pity me for that, Fan. I like him very much.”

“I can't think how you can. I should be sick of him, if I were you.”

“I daresay he is of me.”

“I don't know about that,” demurely replied Fan, turning eyes full of admiration on her cousin, who looked very pretty with the sun shining on her bright hair, and a flush on her cheek from the cold air through which they were driving. “I can fancy that he likes well enough to see *you*. But I won't have him for a cousin-in-law, mind!”

“I haven’t the smallest intention of presenting him to you in that capacity. But really, Fan, you’re too absurd. What business have you to trouble your youthful mind with such ideas? Besides, you are so particular about men’s manners, and I am sure Captain Newman’s are good enough for anybody.”

“He is so frightfully sober. No; I hate him. I am sure I shall like this new friend of Charlie’s—this Mr Moore.”

“He doesn’t seem over-wise, at any rate, from Charlie’s account. *He* won’t be too sober for you.”

“I do like people who can be naughty sometimes,” cried Frances, with precocious worldliness. “It is so dull when they never say or do anything wrong.”

“You think it is good fun, I suppose, when they break either their own hearts, or, what is much more likely, somebody else’s.”

Dorothea pulled up, as she spoke, before the Admiralty House, and together they entered the wide hall, from which opened the drawing-room and dining-room.

Both rooms looked out on the garden—Dorothea's special realm—still bright with autumn flowers, asters and a few geraniums, which had not been touched by the frost. In spite of the difficulty of making flowers grow so near the sea, Dorothea's love of overcoming obstacles had proved successful in this case. For a wonder, she and the gardener were warm allies, and his contempt for all the productions of Eastport (he was a west-countryman) was an unfailing source of amusement to her. However, the dinner-table did justice to their joint taste and skill—though it was, perhaps, hardly appreciated by the guests, who were not very numerous or very entertaining, entirely naval and military, and chiefly retired

officers with their wives and daughters, with which species Eastport abounds.

The Admiral felt it necessary to entertain a good deal, and these duty dinner-parties were sometimes a trial to himself as well as to Lady Katherine and Dorothea; but they went through them gallantly. When Sir Edward said, "It must be done," his word was as much law in his own house as on board ship; and his whole air—his straight upright figure, keen grey eye, and clear-cut features, broad forehead, and firm mouth and chin—showed that not only could he exercise authority if he chose, but that he was well accustomed to do so. Perhaps he could be something of a tyrant: it is rare for a man to be absolute for any length of time, without getting to love the exercise of power for its own sake—unless he is so weak that he always needs to be guided by some one, or so lazy that he prefers to let things take their

course. Sir Edward was neither weak nor idle, but he rarely made his hand felt heavily, except where it was needed, and he was much liked in his service, while his wife adored him, and between him and his daughter there was perfect confidence. The member of the family most inclined to rebel was Frances, who had a natural dislike to all authority; but she had too much sense seriously to contemplate mutiny.

On this October evening, while Sir Edward was endeavouring to fulfil Nelson's maxim (and finding it hard work) with Mrs Jenkins, a stout phlegmatic old lady with a strong tendency to drowsiness; and while Lady Katherine was straining her ears to catch Admiral Jenkins's murmured remarks, and answering "Yes" and "No" rather vaguely, where she hoped they would fit; and while Miss Harvey, dressed in the extreme of East-port fashion, in a bright red gown, cut very

low, and unrelieved by even a *soupçon* of white, was trying to captivate Colonel Brise, who was a new arrival, and looked at her sideways, as if she were some new and strange variety whose species he had not yet discovered; and while the rest of the party were discussing Eastport gossip, the arrival of the last transport, and the prospect of the next dance,—Dorothea was sitting, looking very beautiful and serene, by the side of Captain Newman, whom she knew so well that it was not necessary to begin conversation the moment they sat down.

“It was very good of you to place me here,” he said at last; and Dorothea smiled, but replied—

“Mother did all that, or rather” (with a conscientious regard for truth) “we arranged it together; and, in fact, I wish we could have given you a change, but it can’t be helped.”

She spoke to him quite frankly, as to a man a good deal older than herself, as indeed he was, being at least five-and-thirty, and looking more. He was one of those men who never look very young, and accordingly are treated with an unusual amount of confidence by the fair sex. Moreover, he always seemed to take Dorothea's remarks as naturally as she made them, and never embarrassed her with compliments.

"And when I come to think of it," she went on, "I don't believe you and Miss Harvey would have got on very well together. Do you think so?"

"No," he said, so gravely and simply that she laughed.

"How delightful the world would be," she said, "if one could choose whom one would know!"

"Too delightful a world by half," he answered; "but what would become of

the poor people whom nobody chose to know ? ”

“ They would have to find their like,” laughed Dorothea ; “ ‘ birds of a feather flock together,’ you know.”

“ Seriously,” he said, “ I think they get punishment enough as it is. Haven’t you noticed the men who dance so badly that no girl will dance with them, standing looking on gloomily at a ball from a corner ? ”

“ Not often,” said Dorothea, candidly ; “ but I often see girls, who are either very plain or very uninteresting, *sitting* in a corner all through a dance, and I am very sorry for them.”

With her beauty, and her position as queen of her own little circle, he thought she could afford to be sorry for them ! but he went on—

“ Well, take another class—the men who never succeed ; aren’t you sorry for them ? ”

“My father thinks people always get on who deserve it.”

“Ah! Sir Edward is a successful man. No,”—seeing she flushed a little,—“I don’t mean he is unfair; but a man who has never had any serious *contretemps* in his life, can hardly understand the struggling lives of those men who never get into harbour: they are always sailing as near the wind as they can, and yet they seem to gain nothing by tacking.”

“Why don’t they change their course?”

“Easier said than done; or perhaps they do rather too often, and not only their course, but their ship and their pilot too—and then they make no way at all.”

“It’s very sad; but, Captain Newman——” she paused.

“Yes,” he said courteously, turning his head a little, and looking at her while her eyes were cast down.

“You said people who were successful could not understand those who fail. But your life is not what you describe?”

“Not altogether, perhaps, though that depends rather on what you call success.”

“I think you are shifting your ground,” said Dorothea. “Of course, if by success you mean that every wish one has is gratified, *no* one is successful.”

“Perhaps it depends rather on the proportion of wishes realised,” he said; “but in truth, what the world calls success is worth very little if the one wish of your heart is disappointed.”

“People ought not to depend on one thing like that,” said Dorothea, impatiently. “Take a man who has been disappointed in love. That is what people generally mean, I suppose, by not getting the one thing they want. Well, that has no business to spoil a man’s whole life. I don’t believe it does,

either; it is only in novels that *that* happens. Real life doesn't turn on a love-story. What fills a three-volume novel takes only a few months, or at most a few years, to happen, and a man's business lasts much longer, and is much more important, than that."

"Well," he said, amused at her vehemence, "at least those few months may make a difference to all the rest of his life."

"Of course it does, in a sense. But what I mean is, that a man's home-life is almost always secondary. His real business is his professional life, whatever it may be. Now, with a woman it is different, I allow. Her home-life is the first thing with her, and matters ever so much more to her. And that is why," she added, smiling, "it is so hard for us women to understand why you men are so deep in your own business and affairs that you have hardly time to think of us at all."

“I don’t think you often have that complaint to make of sailors,” he said. “We are away from you ladies so long, that we make the most of you at home.”

“Or learn to do without us altogether. It is all very well to talk of women’s rights and things like that, but women can never get on long together alone without quarrelling—except, I suppose, in sisterhoods, where they are kept strictly under rule ; and that shows how inferior they are to men, who get on quite well without women.”

“I must beg leave to differ from you there, Miss Nevill. What makes you so hard on us all round, this evening ?”

“I don’t know, I am sure.”

Perhaps she was thinking of Hugh’s love-story, which had set her off on these reflections ; but she could not with fairness repeat it, even to Captain Newman, who was no gossip.

CHAPTER V.

“ My idea of an agreeable person is a person who agrees with me.”

THE Austrian Lloyd glided swiftly through the waters of the blue Adriatic, and Hugh's seafaring powers were not unpleasantly tested, for the “broad back of the sea” remained smooth as glass during the thirty-six hours of the voyage to Trieste. There was a certain sense of exhilaration in turning his steps homewards and to work once more. Of course he grumbled a little,—every Englishman does, more especially every soldier,—but he was really fond of his work, though no one could more thoroughly enjoy

a holiday. It must be confessed that this particular holiday had hardly been a success, for at the end of it he found himself entangled in an unpleasant affair, which, the more he contemplated, the less he liked. Away from Clara's fascinations, he was more than ever alive to the disagreeable consequences—to use no stronger word—which an engagement with her would involve; and yet, so contradictory is human nature, more than ever did he feel himself bound in honour to her, at least for the present. He could not conceal from himself that it would be a satisfactory conclusion if she were promptly to marry some one else; and yet he rebelled at the idea. As they had smoked their pipes together the last evening, Jack Ward had asked him casually how his love-affair had been progressing, and he had answered, half joking, “Oh, I’m out of the running. Why don’t you cut in yourself?” What if he

should take the suggestion in earnest, and act upon it?

With some difficulty Hugh shook himself free from his reverie, and began to look about him. The ship was not full; but there was a considerable variety among the passengers, most of whom had come from farther east. There was a Turk in a genuine fez, and a couple of Greek merchants in seedy European clothes, all on their way to Trieste; a member of the English Embassy at Constantinople, returning home on leave with his wife and two little children; one or two good-looking Austrian officers, very smart, and with most graceful manners; a young Italian artist who had been painting in Corfu, and was on his way back to Venice; a British bridal couple, finishing their honeymoon, and still in the honey stage; and last, but not least, especially in his own estimation, the

special correspondent of the 'Radical Mercury,' the great advanced newspaper of the provincial press. They were hardly out of sight of Corfu when this gentleman, much to Hugh's amusement, began to attack him on the subject of the "Eastern Question," in continuance, apparently, of a conversation he had had the day before with the diplomatist. Indeed, Mr Vivian could not long escape being drawn into the discussion, and Hugh was glad to pass the inquisitive Mr James on to him, feeling himself unequal to reply to all his inquiries on a subject on which he was not well posted up.

"I have been into the interior of Albania and Greece," explained the correspondent, "and have been much struck by the progress making in civilisation and freedom."

Hugh assented, more from lazy dislike to an argument than from conviction, for he

had thought the Albanians of the coast singularly savage-looking.

“ I was interested yesterday in hearing Mr Vivian’s opinions in regard to Turkey ” (he would have been puzzled to say precisely what information he had gained as to Mr Vivian’s opinions), “ and I am anxious to know his views as to the future of the Hellenic and Slav races.”

“ They’re in dangerous proximity, no doubt,” remarked Mr Vivian, adjusting his eye-glass, and apparently examining the ship’s bulwarks with great care.

“ Oh ! ah ! ” said the man of literature, as if that was a new idea ; “ *dangerous* proximity, do you think ? Do you see any signs of disagreement ? Is the diplomatic horizon clouded ? ”

“ We have hardly got so far as diplomacy yet with Albania,” remarked Mr Vivian, with a hardly perceptible smile.

“ True ; for as yet her autonomy has not been secured. It is to be hoped that the singular success of the reforms in Greece will lead to further efforts among the Slavs—a people with endless capacities—now cruelly rendered all but useless by their enslaved condition. What are your views with regard to the present position of Turkey ? ”

“ Rather a large question,” said Hugh ; and Mr Vivian relapsed into another smile, and then, finding Mr James was waiting for an answer, remarked with great deliberation, as if he were giving a weighty piece of information—

“ There is improvement in some respects, and doubtless decadence in others.”

This apparently harmless sentiment, however, gave umbrage to Mr James, who was too thorough-going a Radical to admit the possibility of any good in the Turk, and only responded sardonically—

“ Ah ! you are a Turcophil ! Wonderful how all Englishmen living in Constantinople get so fond——”

“ Of those gentlemen in fezzes,” said Hugh, glancing at the representative of that much-abused nation, who was tranquilly smoking a little distance off.

“ Fine fellows they are, too,” said the diplomatist, sauntering off to join his wife, who had just come on deck with her children. The elder, a little girl of seven or eight, soon made great friends with Hugh, and trotted about with her hand in his all the morning. She took a great dislike to the correspondent, and a great fancy to the Austrian officers with their handsome uniforms, and was always dragging Hugh in their direction, and looking up at them from under the broad brim of her white hat, with a mixture of shyness and forwardness which was very diverting to him. He was fond of

children, especially pretty little girls, and of course his kindness to her child won the mother's heart. Mrs Vivian was a languid, delicate-looking woman, with a slight lisp and a slow manner that bordered on affectation—not at all happy at sea, in spite of the calm weather, and divided between her own headache and her anxiety for her children, the younger of whom was in the charge of a young Greek nurse, who gave herself up for lost if ever the land was out of sight. Mrs Vivian was therefore doubly grateful to Hugh for taking the elder child off her hands; and when they parted at Trieste, she expressed many hopes of meeting at some future day.

During the afternoon the correspondent had attached himself to the Austrians, who talked very fair English, but were puzzled by some of his questions, and there was a good deal of gesticulation and laughing over

their answers. They soon discovered, however, who he was, and became almost as guarded and "official" as Mr Vivian. But Mr James was quite clever enough to extract a certain amount of information even from such unpromising subjects; and they would all have been surprised if, a few days later, they had seen an article in the 'Radical Mercury' from "our Special Correspondent," containing an account of what "a distinguished member of the British Embassy at Constantinople communicated to me as to the prospects of the Porte in Europe and Asia;" and, "I learned from an interesting conversation with some Austrian officers, who courteously assured me," &c., &c.

At Trieste Hugh landed, and had time to walk about the town, see the ancient church with its beautifully preserved mosaics, and admire the oriental costumes in the streets—for Trieste is called, not without justice, the

gate of the East—before he started in the train for Calais, *en route* for England. He travelled to Aldershot almost without stopping, and there spent a day or two, arranging about the transfer of his goods and chattels to Eastport, before proceeding on a visit to his parents in Ireland.

CHAPTER VI.

“’Tis distance lends enchantment to the view.”

HUGH’S travels came at length to an end on a chilly autumnal evening, and the dawdling train pulled up slowly at the little country station near his home. The deliberation of the porters and the other railway officials, who all immediately recognised him, and wanted to hold a long conversation with him on the spot, tried his patience considerably; and their vociferous compliments did not long detain him, though the rich brogue sounded sweet in his ears after his long absence from Ireland. The dog-cart from the castle was waiting for him, and,

taking the reins from the groom's hands, he replied to his "Welcome home, Mr Hugh," with a friendly salutation, and started his ponies homeward at a brisk trot. The man cautioned him about Jenny—a new purchase—who had a very strong mouth, and "the will of a woman."

"And how are they all at home?" added Hugh, delighting in the fresh moorland air and brisk motion, and indifferent to the holes and ruts which were plentiful in the road, and over which the dogcart bounded as the ponies raced along.

"Sure, and as well as your honour could expect," said O'Donnell, in answer to his question, and keeping his eyes fixed on Jenny's ears.

"Why, what do you mean? Is any one ill?"

"It wasn't me that said so," was the oracular answer.

“What on earth do you mean? Can’t you say Yes or No?”

That was just what a true Irishman never would say, if he could possibly help it; and Hugh ought to have known it.

“Sure you’re grown such a fine young gentleman,” said the man, soothingly but not very connectedly; “and you’ll have been seeing many fine sights since you left us.”

“What’s that got to do with it?” said Hugh. But at that moment Jenny swerved violently at a white post, and his attention was distracted by a gap in the hedge. They were nearing the house, and he was surprised that it had not been mended.

“What’s that left for?” he asked.

“Sure, your honour, it has been so a year or more, ever since I can remember.”

“Your memory’s very short, then, for it was all right less than a year ago, when I was here. That means no rents, I suppose?”

“ I’ll not be surprised if your honour’s right entirely,” said O’Donnell, calmly ; “ but his lordship will be pleased to see you, and no doubt all will be put to rights now. With Mr Moore ill, there’s many things have been left for your honour to settle.”

“ Mr Moore ill ! They never told me,” cried Hugh, startled and grieved, for he was very fond of his brother. He began to notice how cold and dark the night was, and what a disgraceful state the drive was in, and how Jenny was pulling ; but though he asked many questions, he could get no further information from O’Donnell, who, finding he was distressed, at once tried to soften down his remark, but could not so set Hugh’s fears at rest. At last the ponies dashed up to the house,—a large, ugly, white building, of no particular style of architecture,—and stopped under the portico. The big hall-door was open, and Lord Glen-

garn waiting to receive his son. He looked worn and older, Hugh thought, and the wrinkles in his brow were not smoothed away even by his smile of welcome. He had hardly spoken, when Hugh said—

“What is this about Ion being ill?”

“Oh, has O'Donnell told you?” — with a shade of displeasure. “I am sorry your home-coming should be clouded, my dear boy; but we did not think it worth while to write, as you would so soon be here. The fact is” (he lowered his voice), “your mother is worried and anxious. I don't myself think it is so bad, but you know she can't get on without the doctors, and the doctors always make things out as bad as they can—good for the profession, you understand!”

“But what's the matter?” asked Hugh, who began to despair of getting any information.

“A chill—a chill,” said his father. “But

come along and see him ; you'll cheer us all up a bit."

They went through the large bare hall, and along a narrow badly lighted passage, to a room which seemed to Hugh very hot and stuffy, after his long cold drive. There was a fire, near which his mother was sitting ; and in an arm-chair, looking pale and listless, was his brother.

Lady Glengarn had been handsome in her youth, but the bright flush which had been becoming then, had settled into a hard red colour on both cheeks, which made her look as if she would never get cool. The high spirits of her girlhood had deserted her, and she was a prey to fits of depression and nervousness, which had drawn many lines across her forehead and round her mouth ; and Hugh knew only too well what his father meant when he said she was worried and anxious.

“Well, old chap,” said Hugh, “I am very sorry to hear you are not well.”

“I am all right,” said Ion, fretfully, his brows contracting slightly, “or rather I should be if I were once out of this beastly hole.”

“A pretty way of speaking of your native place,” said his father, laughing—a little nervously, Hugh thought; and Lady Glengarn added—

“It is a way he has got into of late. He used to be very fond of it, but now it appears to disgust him.”

“And so it would you, mother, if you were stuck into a little stuffy room like this, and never allowed to go and get a breath of fresh air.”

“A breath of fresh air means a day’s hunting, I suppose,” retorted Lady Glengarn.

“A day’s hunting would do me pounds of good.”

“I daresay. You hear him?” turning

to Lord Glengarn; "and you think I am cruel for not letting him do exactly what he pleases! Why, he could no more hunt now than a baby!"

"Oh, there, mother!" cried the invalid; "let's turn the conversation. Come, Hugh, old boy, tell us what you've been doing. Any adventures? Any fairy princess?"

Hugh had been standing with his back to the fire, much astonished and embarrassed at this passage of arms between his mother and brother. He had always looked on Ion as her favourite child; and though she had not brought up her children to treat her with any elaborate respect, this sort of thing was unusual, and fairly startled him.

He knew his mother too well, however, not to be aware that it was her intense anxiety and affection for Ion that made her so irritable, and unable to bear contradiction; and as his illness had much the same

effect on the invalid himself, the result was very trying for all parties.

Hugh at once perceived his brother's efforts to avoid further wrangling, and eagerly threw himself into the breach, ready to do anything—even invent adventures—for his amusement.

Truth to tell, he found the few days which he passed at the castle hang very heavily on hand. He went out hunting one day; but the thought of Ion cowering over the fire spoilt his pleasure, and the wistful look in his brother's eyes, as he had watched him start from the hall window, went to Hugh's heart, and haunted him all day. The longer he stayed, the more his brother's condition depressed him, and the more surely he realised the change that a few months only had wrought; and one day, as he and his father were sitting together in the smoking-room after dinner, he said that he

thought Ion was quite right, and that he ought to go abroad.

“So do I,” said Lord Glengarn, “and I shall begin to make arrangements for going to Cannes. The boy has set his heart on it, and that is enough. Dr Morris talks of Bournemouth, but Ion won’t hear of it.”

“Well, Cannes would be livelier. It is a pity my mother is so dead against it. I think it worries him. I tell you what,”—and Hugh choked a little as he spoke,—“it’s as much as a fellow can stand to see old Ion like this. He used to be up to anything, and now the least thing upsets him; and his gallant attempts, every now and then, to seem as if he was all right, are almost worse than all.”

“It is most disheartening; and Morris was so confident he could cure him in next to no time—and now he says he’s no constitution. Why, as you say, the boy used to

be up to everything, and as strong as a horse. I can't understand this sudden break-down."

There was a pause, while the father and son gazed into the fire, and the smoke from their pipes ascended in meditative curves.

"Haven't you had any other doctor?" said Hugh, presently.

"Oh yes; a fellow from Dublin came over one day,—can't remember his name. He said Morris was doing the right thing; and then they put their heads together, and said the place was damp—and that made your mother angry."

"Well, it *is* damp," said Hugh; "the mist was awfully thick over the lake to-night." Perhaps a remembrance of the glowing climes of Corfu flashed across him for the moment; but he continued, "I tell you what, father—I wish you would have that swampy bit between the lake and the house drained."

“All right, if you will provide the money. The fact is, I have none to spare.”

“I am very sorry,” said Hugh. After a moment’s consideration he continued, holding his pipe between his fingers, and looking straight before him—“I am very sorry indeed, for I was going to ask you for some.”

It was a considerable effort to speak of his debts at such a moment. Had he been only the easy-going fellow some of his friends thought him, he would have put it off to a more convenient season; but he knew too well the misery of any less straightforward expedient, and made his plunge boldly. His father asked how much he wanted, and was relieved to hear him name a comparatively small sum.

“You shall have it, my boy,” he said, laying his hand affectionately on his son’s shoulder,—“nothing like starting fair in

a fresh place. Don't you ever be afraid to come to your old father when you are in difficulties. You are a good boy, and I was young myself once. But be careful now, and don't spend more than you can help, for times are bad, and I get hardly any rents."

"Was the harvest so bad again?" asked Hugh, more deeply touched by his father's confidence and generosity than he could express.

"The harvest was fair—fair; but the people don't pay. Why should they, when, by holding out a little longer, they will get some more reduction? They'll live rent-free at last, and the landlords will be shoved out altogether. But that won't happen in my time—at least, I think not, though things march pretty fast in these days. Talk of progress indeed! It isn't much progress I have seen since I was a boy. Solomon tells

us not to say that the old times were better than the new ; but, upon my word, I think they were ! ”

“ There will be a turn of the wheel some day,” said Hugh.

“ Well, there may—there may. Not in my time. And you can’t put back the confidence and good understanding between classes, when that has once been disturbed. You can’t prevent people making land a speculation, and agreements between landlord and tenant a matter of hard money-bargaining, like any other buying and selling ; for, mind you, if you do away with the present class of landlords, you will get a much harder set in their place, with a regular commercial spirit, and no consideration for poverty or distress. Depend upon it, it’s easier to destroy than to build up again.

“ However, thank heaven, you aren’t one of these new-fangled economists ; and, to

come back to what I was saying, I shall have to live carefully enough just for the present, for there will be a heavy drain on my purse, what with this illness of Ion's, and the going abroad, and all that. I shall have to take your mother and him out to Cannes, and perhaps stay there too myself; so I shall want some one to look after my affairs here while I am away. I tell you what, my boy; if you ever marry,—and I hope you will, and keep up the family—for God knows if Ion will live to do it,—you must take care that the young woman has some money.”

Hugh made no response, but looked gloomily down, puffing away at his pipe, and his father said questioningly—

“Anything the matter? Your mother and I have often talked the subject over, and only the other day it struck us that Sir Edward Nevill's daughter would be the very thing.”

“Sir Edward Nevill? Who on earth do you mean?”

“The Admiral at Eastport. He married Lady Katherine Drury, who used to be one of my best partners in old days—days when I was in the Guards, and she was having her first or second season. She was such a pretty girl. And I hear her daughter is quite as pretty, and the only child, and will come in for her mother’s money as well as Sir Edward’s.”

“Oh ay! I remember now,—Drake’s cousin. I fancy I am forestalled there, sir. There is a cousin in the question, who is coming to Eastport as the Admiral’s flag-lieutenant; and you know a cousin is a serious obstacle.”

“Oh, well, I don’t know; that depends. Anyhow, there is no harm in keeping your eyes open.”

“I shall certainly do that. But as to any-

thing further, pray put it out of your head. On my own account, quite independently of Miss Nevill's cousin, I could not think of it."

"And pray why not?"

"Well, in the first place, I hate making plans like that about any girl—in short, I couldn't do it; and in the next place, I am bound by honour elsewhere."

"Good gracious, Hugh!" cried poor Lord Glengarn, startled and alarmed; "and you never told us! Pray explain yourself. How long has this secret arrangement been going on?"

It required a tremendous effort on Hugh's part to proceed, and his tone became defiant in proportion.

"I daresay you will be shocked, but pray hear me to the end. It is Miss Wilson, the Consul's daughter at Corfu, who——"

"The Consul's daughter! Good gracious!"

once more ejaculated Lord Glengarn, but under his breath.

“She is very pretty and charming.”

“Oh, of course!” still *sotto voce*.

“And her father treated her like a brute on my account; and when I found out how unhappy she was, and I was going away, what could I do?”

“And she has nothing, I suppose?”

“No.”

“And how will you live on nothing, pray? Do you expect me to support the Consul’s daughter?”

“Certainly not; but we are not going to be married to-morrow.”

“I am glad to hear it! But am I to understand it is a formal engagement? Will the lady be willing to wait?”

“Clara would be willing, but her father won’t hear of it at all. Indeed he almost kicked me out of doors.”

“Well, this passes everything! A son of mine scorned by a Levantine Consul! Pray proceed.”

“I have nothing more to tell you if you take it in that way,” said Hugh, with a stony feeling in his heart, as he realised how bad it all looked, and that, for all he had done towards gaining his father’s consent, he had better have kept silence on the subject altogether. The shock to Lord Glen-garn had indeed been terrible; but after a minute or two, his spirits rose as he comprehended the full significance of the Consul’s disapproval; and he was ready now to argue with his son, trying to prove to him that his honour was by no means concerned in this silly engagement with Clara Wilson.

But on this point Hugh was not to be converted. He knew that she loved him, and he was not going to desert her at a moment’s notice, just because his father

treated the whole subject so much more lightly than he did himself. Moreover, the fair Clara had run the gauntlet as far as detection was concerned; and only that morning a letter with the Corfu post-mark had been lying on his plate when he came down to breakfast. It would hardly be truthful to say that he was pleased when he opened the envelope and saw Clara's familiar signature; but his heart melted as he read the letter, and pictured the glowing face and lustrous eyes that had bent over it. Once more the spell of her fascination domineered over his better judgment, and he began to feel twinges of remorse when he recollected he was bound by his promise to Mr Wilson not to return any answer to all those endearing professions. But, after all, he was really craving for sympathy; and directly his father assumed a softer tone and manner, he poured out the whole story, laying more

than enough stress on the extent of his own attentions to Clara, and putting out of sight her own evident efforts to attract his admiration. Indeed, Hugh had almost succeeded in forgetting them himself.

The old lord listened very attentively, and did not fail to observe the somewhat strained tone in which Hugh spoke. He knew his son too well not to notice the want of naturalness and freedom in the way he talked of Clara, and Hugh saw that he was not making much impression; so, as a last resource, he laid the letter before his father. This is what he read:—

“DEAR MR MOORE,—It was very kind of you to write to me, and it comforted me a little; and, indeed, I needed comfort, for I have been *very* miserable since you left. Papa says he made you promise not to do it again; but that is all nonsense. Do,

please, write to me, for I am so unhappy. You see I am going to send you this letter in spite of papa, and I shall manage to get your letters all right. Oh, dear Mr Moore! don't forget all about me, now you have gone away. I shall die if you do! Papa is very unkind to me, and I don't care for any lawn-tennis or anything. I was in bed quite ill for two days, and I am never hungry now.

I always go every day and look over the harbour, and watch the ships and the mountains you used to talk about, and I think, not every day but every hour, of that dance on the Royal Britain. Every night I count the days, and say to myself how many it is since you left, and when you will come again. Please, *please* write and tell me when you are coming. I see Mr Ward very often, but I dare not ask him about you. Did you have a good voyage, and get safe

to Ireland? Please tell me about *everything*. If you knew how wretched I am without you, you would not care about papa. I am sure he will give in soon, and then everything will come right. Corfu is very dull now, and the weather has changed and got wet and stormy since you left. How I wish I were going to Eastport too! I am dreadfully afraid you will be angry with me for writing to you, but I could not help it; and every day I shall watch and wait for the post till I get your answer.—Yours ever, CLARA WILSON.

“*P.S.*—I forgot to tell you that Mr Ward says that he will take care of any letters for me that you send. Then it will be quite safe. He is very kind to me, now you are gone.”

Lord Glengarn fairly burst out laughing when he had perused this epistle.

“Upon my word, Hugh,” he said, “is it possible that you have lost your heart to this child?”

“She is childish,” said Hugh, parrying the question rather than answering it; “but that is her bringing-up.”

“It is her bringing-up, I suppose, that makes her utterly disregard her father’s wishes and your promises? Strikes me her code of honour isn’t very fine!”

“Well, I daresay not; her mother was a Greek.”

“An answer worthy of John Bull himself! Did her mother teach her to tell stories too? Just look at the letter: in one breath she says she dare not speak to Mr Ward about you, and in the next that Mr Ward will be the medium of correspondence between you. How do you explain that?”

“I don’t know, I’m sure,” said Hugh.

“You confess that puzzled you? Well,

to sum up this young lady's qualifications—she is childish, penniless, has no idea of the value of a promise, or of the duty of obedience, or of truth, and has a pretty considerable idea how to flirt.”

Hugh could not help smiling, but he knit his brows and answered—“That is one side. The other is, that she is young and very pretty, confiding and affectionate, and with no mother to guard her, and is hardly treated by her father.”

“She makes the most of that, no doubt; but really, if I was blessed with such a daughter, I think I should keep a pretty tight hand over her. Now, my dear boy, be reasonable. Is she, do you think in your sober senses, a woman who would make you happy as a wife? And if she were, have you any prospect of being able to marry her?”

“Certainly not, to the last question.”

“If you were honest with yourself, you would say so to the first too. The fact is, you are afraid.”

“Well,” said Hugh at last, “the fact is, I *am* afraid of being dishonourable.”

“Just so; and you won’t do the dishonourable thing—which would be to write to this girl, as she implores you to do. As to dishonour, I see none in letting an affair drop which can never come to a satisfactory conclusion. Depend upon it, she will soon console herself with some one else. It seems to me she has already begun the process with your friend Ward.”

“I don’t believe it!” cried Hugh, warmly. “I’m certain Jack Ward would never play me such a nasty trick.”

“Ah! Well, at my age one gets more sceptical. You have unlimited faith in human nature. What a pity that one gets undeceived! However, you will make up your

mind, won't you, my dear boy, not to do anything rash?"

"I *have* made up my mind to that. I have promised Mr Wilson not to write to Clara, and I won't. I shall make Ward give her a message from me not to expect it."

"How much longer does Ward stop there?"

"I don't know. I thought he would have been gone before this."

"Well, don't keep up a fire of messages with Miss Wilson; and above all things, Hugh, don't say a word of all this to your mother—it will only worry her, and do no good."

"I promise you that," said Hugh, who was much more afraid of her than of his father.

Lady Glengarn had a truly feminine disregard for logic, and her arguments were chiefly assertions: when you had a very strong case, this did not so much matter; but when, as

in the present instance, the case resolved itself into a point of honour, which it was more than probable she would ignore even more completely than her husband had done, the contest would be irritating—and Hugh did not like to feel angry with any woman, least of all with his mother.

CHAPTER VII.

“She knows a deeper statescraft, sirs, than you.”

It must be confessed that, at the end of another week, a summons from the Admiral at Eastport, appointing the day when he was to take up his work there, was not altogether unwelcome to Hugh. Anxious though he was to do all in his power to make the time pass less heavily for his brother, there was something in the atmosphere of the Castle that oppressed him. There was less than usual going on, both in his home and in the neighbourhood, and his thoughts were in consequence free to brood more persistently than was agreeable upon the recent events of

his life, and his present unsatisfactory position. As the days wore on, he noted, to his surprise, that his mother's opposition to the Cannes idea had suddenly vanished, and she began to take the keenest interest in all the plans and arrangements for the journey, and was even anxious to hasten the departure as much as possible. She never told anybody how it was that Ion's illness became a much more serious matter in her eyes; but she went about the house with a look in her face as if she had some secret pain gnawing at her heart, and hardly let any one but herself wait upon her son.

Hugh did what he could to help them by writing to some friends at Cannes, who promised to find rooms for the party at one of the hotels; and Ion's spirits began to revive at the thought of a change. His brother's society had unconsciously been of great service to him, by bringing him more in

contact with the outside world, and causing him to forget for the time what he pathetically spoke of as “crushing hard luck.” His mother’s temperament was too like his own to make her a good nurse for him—she never saw how it fretted and teased him to be always asked how he felt; whereas Hugh possessed the wonderful knack of always seeming to know whether his brother were tired or not, without making any remark on the subject.

When, in addition to his strength, it is given to a man to exercise the tact and gentleness of a woman, his services are never willingly parted with for a moment by the invalid. Had it not been for a generous regard for his mother’s feelings, Hugh would have haunted his brother’s rooms much oftener than he did already.

The last week of his stay was enlivened by the presence of his married sister, who, in

spite of her husband's absence in America, contrived to leave her children, though she was never quite happy out of their sight, in order to spend a few days at the Castle before the general flitting to Cannes. Mrs Fitzgerald had always been Hugh's *confidante*, and her arrival was, at this particular juncture, an immense comfort to him. They had not been very long together before all his troubles and perplexities were poured into her sympathising ears. She was still quite young and very lively, devoted to athletics of all sorts and kinds, and yet not wanting in feminine tact, and of peculiarly quick sympathy. They were riding together when the name of Clara Wilson first slipped out; and by the time the whole history had been drawn from her brother, she had formed her own conclusions. The state of the case appeared even clearer to her than it had to her father; and, woman-like, she was more severe on Clara.

“Bound to her, forsooth! Stuff and nonsense! I didn’t know your head was so full of sentimental absurdity!”

“It’s all very well to talk of absurdity, Nora; but who was it who was so indignant with Teddy Barnes for throwing over Miss Waters?”

“Captain Barnes! Don’t talk to me about him! That was an utterly and entirely different thing. They were actually engaged, and she was a charming girl, and hadn’t thrown herself at his head.”

“And who told you Miss Wilson had, either?”

“You think I have no eyes?”

“You can’t see through a wall.”

“I can see through a glass door. Really, you men are incomprehensible! *You*, who might have had the pick of all the prettiest Irish girls, to go and fall in love with a stupid little thing out at Corfu! Why

don't you go to the moon and fall in love there?"

"Too long a journey. And, to crown it all, my father goes and tells me it would be a most suitable and desirable thing, and all that is proper and charming, if I were to marry Sir Edward Nevill's daughter!"

"Oh do, Hugh, do!" cried Nora, letting her reins drop and clasping her hands; "it would be the very thing. She is lovely. I met her in London last year. Oh, do ask her if she remembers me!"

"I am sure she won't. You are far too insignificant."

"Don't be rude. Oh, Hugh, do marry her! I should love to have her for a sister-in-law."

"I never do anything that's proper, as you know well enough; and I certainly don't intend to marry to give you a sister-in-law. You'll have to be thankful for any one I bring you in that capacity."

“If it’s Miss Wilson, I shall fight her within the first half-hour of our introduction.”

“Clara never fights.”

“What a poor, mean-spirited creature!” turning up her pretty little nose. “What on earth would happen if we were all so meek and mild? and what would all you men of war do?”

“Is that remark addressed to me, or are you referring to an ironclad?”

Nora laughed, and shook her riding-whip at him.

“By the by, is it true,” she asked, “that we are to have another African war?”

“I am not in the secret any more than you are. It would be good news for me.”

“You would volunteer directly?”

“Of course—and thank my stars for such a chance.”

“Poor Hugh! tired of his playing at soldiers!”

“It’s no playing, I can tell you.”

“Oh no! Poor boy! he never gets any leave—always starving, night and day—never has any fun—never time to go abroad and fall in love—never time to ride about the country with his sister.”

“It pleases you to be facetious, Mrs Fitzgerald,” said Hugh, with only the ghost of a smile curling his moustache. “Be thankful that your husband isn’t a man of war at all, but only a pleasure-yacht.”

“Fie, for shame! a pleasure-yacht indeed! Who does more work than he, I should like to know?”

“Oh, no one but his wife—and she’s the hardest-worked woman in the country!”

Hugh was smiling now, broadly.

“You needn’t laugh, Hugh; it’s perfectly true. But you men never believe that a woman does anything.”

“I grant you she’s busy enough, even if

her work doesn't count for much. But then, many a yacht goes more miles in a year than a man-of-war."

"And does more work, and costs the country nothing. All an excellent parable."

"Humph! and would be as helpless as you would be in any real danger."

"Helpless! Really, Hugh, you take one's breath away. You are too impertinent to be talked to to-day. I think your stay at Corfu has made you imbecile—or Miss Wilson has spoilt you. I retract that desire of mine that you should marry Dorothy Nevill—you are not worthy of her."

"Dorothy Nevill! What a pretty name!"

"Much prettier than Clara Wilson—much too pretty for you. I tell you she's lovely, only you are not worthy to appreciate her."

"Thank you, my sister. Now a truce to these amenities, for we must behave respect-

ably indoors, and I see poor Ion's face at the window."

"Speak for yourself. When was I other than respectability personified? Though, really, it's a wonder I can bear up at all, considering I have a husband in California; one brother so rude that I can't speak to him, and another in a consumption; and a mother——"

"Come, not a word against her! It's bad enough for us to see Ion like this, but ten times worse for her. I would give all I possess to see the old boy look as he used to."

"So would I, I am sure," said Nora, with an irrepressible sigh, as they entered the house.

When one is young and happy, the atmosphere of grief and sickness seems so unnatural that it is almost unbearable: one turns away from it with relief, and faces it

again with a sickening feeling of intolerance. That ride through the light fresh air had driven away from the brother and sister, for the time being, the atmosphere of oppression which hung round their home; and now it came back upon them with a fresh sense of weight and weariness, which they made an instinctive effort to throw off. It is so hard to learn to suffer. We think we are meant to be happy, and it needs many years and many severe lessons to undeceive us. The last lesson of all is to expect sorrow, and to bear it calmly without trying to get rid of it; and some people never learn that at all.

Three days after Hugh's departure for Eastport, the Glengarn party set off for Cannes. Nothing more had been said by his father on the subject of Clara Wilson; but Hugh had written to Jack Ward, telling him to let her know he could not on any account break his word to her father by writing to

her. Not long after his arrival at Eastport, he received a letter from his friend, announcing his intention of spending the winter at Corfu, and of proceeding to Eastport in the spring. He enclosed another message from Miss Wilson, to the effect that if Mr Moore didn't write to her, she was quite sure he could not care for her, and she would probably die. Hugh did not quite believe that threat, but it did not tend to make him more cheerful; and altogether his residence at Eastport began under rather melancholy auspices.

The hints thrown out by his father with regard to Miss Nevill made him dislike the idea of meeting her, and he was resolved at any rate not to call at Admiralty House before it was absolutely necessary. He was thrown, of course, more among the military than the naval circles; but the society of Eastport was sufficiently small to

be a grand field for gossip, and Sir Edward Nevill and his family were fully and freely discussed. Miss Blanche Harvey, in her bright red dress, was seen everywhere, and knew everybody. Hugh was no exception. When, at a reception of his chief's, he happened to receive the honour of an introduction, she proceeded to enlighten him then and there as to the private histories of most of the other guests, but also of the Admiral and his party, who were not present. Hugh did not talk scandal himself; but he was much entertained by this young lady,—no longer, by the by, in the first bloom of youth,—and listened to her with so much attention, that she flattered herself she had made an impression. He ventured to say he had heard rumours of Miss Nevill's beauty.

“Ah yes!” said Miss Harvey; “she is pretty in a way. Depends which style of beauty you admire. Men mostly admire

the fair insipid sort"—with a little giggle.

"Which do you? Fair or dark?"

"Dark," he answered, rather absently, thinking of Clara; but Miss Harvey, who considered herself a brunette, took it as a personal compliment, and went on with more assurance—

"Then I'll bet you anything you'll be disappointed in Miss Nevill. I quite agree with you, however. You would say, of course, that girls are never fair judges of each other's charms"—with another giggle.

"There is no fear of jealousy, at any rate, in this case," said Hugh, smiling; and Miss Harvey fell in love with him on the spot, and became most confidential.

"It is said, of course, that she has a great many admirers; but then, you know, sailors are so indiscriminate. They have no taste, and always fall into the first snare that is laid for them."

“ And you think we soldiers are more particular ? ”

“ How can you ask ? ”—with a little smirk above her fan. “ However, you mustn’t think Dorothy Nevill is ugly ; and she sets herself up for being awfully clever, too.”

“ How very alarming ! ”

“ Ah ! you don’t like clever women ? For my part, I think it’s nonsense for girls trying to educate themselves as if they were men, and going in for Greek, and being doctors, and all that. What do they want with such stuff ? I am quite sure men don’t like them any the better for it.”

“ Perhaps that is not their object,” said Hugh ; and Miss Harvey shrugged her shoulders incredulously, and remarked—

“ I should be sorry to be the old women they practise upon.”

“ What ! practise Greek on old women ? ”

“ No, no ; medicine ”—laughing as much as she dared, for she was very tight-laced.

“ And Miss Nevill prescribes for old women ? ”

“ Oh, I expect so. She is the goody-goody sort, you know—goes about with tracts in one hand, and poison in the other.”

“ Dear me ! ” cried Hugh ; “ I hope she won’t try either experiment on me ! ”

“ Depend upon it, she will,” laughed Miss Harvey. “ Oh, bother ! there’s papa moving, and I must go. Come and see us, won’t you ? Tea and muffins. Come and tell me how you get on with Miss Nevill. Bye-bye.”

“ What a caution ! ” thought Hugh, as he turned on his heel ; and then—“ Dorothy Nevill and tracts ! That’s the line, is it ? But one can’t believe anything that creature says. A garrison hack, with a vengeance ! Beastly place this Eastport.”

A few days later he was dining at the

Club, and nearly the first person he saw there was Charlie Drake.

“Holloa, Moore! you here? I had no idea you had arrived. My people said they had seen nothing of you.”

“I have only been here a short time,” said Hugh, rather ashamed of himself, for Drake had pressed him to call at Admiralty House directly he arrived at Eastport.

“If I had known it, I would have come and looked you up. But you must come and call on my aunt. She’s a good-natured old body,” he added, irreverently; “and I want you to know my cousin Dorothy.”

“I have heard a great deal of her,” said Hugh.

“All the women are awfully jealous of her good looks,” said her cousin; “but she is not stuck-up a bit, as some of them would be. She’s an uncommonly good sort, though I say it as shouldn’t.”

“So I should judge, from what Miss Harvey told me the other day.”

“Whew! ’taint often that that young woman has a good word for any one, specially one of her own sex.”

“One judges by contraries sometimes.”

“Oh! ah!” said Drake, laughing. “Well, by this time Dorothy can stand a little of Blanche Harvey’s venomous tongue, and it won’t do her much harm. By the way, have you heard lately from Corfu?”

Hugh did not think the connection between the two remarks very obvious. Had any venomous tongues been wagging at his expense in Corfu, he wondered?

“I heard the other day from Ward,” he answered, glancing sharply at Drake’s face as he spoke; “he is going to stay the winter.”

“So he told me. It strikes me he has found an attraction there.”

“Oh indeed!” said Hugh, with rather

a forced laugh ; but he could not bring himself to pronounce Clara's name.

"Ay," said Drake, as indifferently as he could, but eyeing Hugh curiously to see how he took the information ; " he seems to find Miss Wilson's society very charming, and I should not greatly wonder if they were to make a match of it before the winter is out."

"I should hardly think so. Jack Ward is not the fellow to do anything rash ;" and Hugh was dimly conscious of two very conflicting lines of thought rushing through his mind as he spoke. If one was jealousy, was the other relief ?

"Oh, as to that, one never knows, and the people one is in the habit of crediting with most wisdom do the queerest things."

"Well, he might do worse," said Hugh, rather sharply ; so that Charlie began to feel he was treading on dangerous ground, and hastened to change the subject by saying

he was anxious to introduce Hugh to his uncle, who was in the room. The Admiral greeted Moore very kindly, said he had heard of him from his nephew, and hoped they should see him at Admiralty House. "We want some red coats among our blue," he said; "the ladies complain that the dances are very dull when there are none."

Hugh thanked him, and said he hoped soon to pay his respects to Lady Katherine.

"She knew your father, she tells me," said Sir Edward. "You have just come from Ireland, I think?"

"Yes," said Hugh; "I paid them a flying visit before coming here."

"How is the country going on?"

"They are quiet enough about us, but my father rather expects another storm is brewing. The tenants hold back their rents in hopes of another reduction, and the landlords are retrenching all round."

“H’m! hard on them. I thank my stars I am not an Irish landlord.”

“It is a grand country, though,” said Hugh, his patriotic blood rising at the hinted inferiority of Ireland; “and the people are very decent if they are decently governed.”

“I believe you are right there,” cried the Admiral. “I tell you what,—a representative government is the curse of that country: a good dictator is what you want.”

“They are not very easy to find, I am afraid.”

“Oh, nonsense! that is what all you young men think,” said the Admiral, with a smile; “but take my word for it, there’s plenty of good stuff to be found, if you only know where to look for it. Take your service, take mine,—is there any difficulty in getting men to command when they are wanted? When are we worsted in the long-run?”

The men never fail us—neither the men to command nor the men to follow. But in Ireland they are not given a chance—one day in power, the next out of it; and even when they are in power, governed by wire from Downing Street—monstrous system! monstrous! Upon my word, I think it's a wonder the country gets on as well as it does. However, in spite of all that, things look better; and I believe we have rounded the corner, and are getting into calmer water now. Does not your father think so?"

"I don't think he is very hopeful," said Hugh.

"Well, I daresay living in the midst of it all makes it difficult to see the signs of improvement which we at a distance notice," replied the Admiral, with a serene optimism and persuasion of his own clear-sightedness which amused Hugh, though he afterwards learned to look upon it as a happy character-

istic of Sir Edward, who was very opinionated, but had nothing of the intolerance and bitterness of bigotry in his composition.

This meeting with Drake, and the introduction to his uncle, left Hugh without a shadow of excuse for postponing any longer his afternoon call at Admiralty House, and a day or two afterwards he sallied forth to perform this duty; but as he was shutting the hall-door behind him, a particularly dirty-looking child suddenly accosted him, and thrust a letter into his hand. Hugh was considerably astonished; and if it had been a man who had pushed his unwashed hand into his neatly gloved one, he would probably have dropped the paper and passed on: but he could not resist the pleading eyes of a little child, even though he were ragged and dirty. In the badly written and almost unintelligible epistle he found himself entreated to go and visit a poor man—a former

private in his regiment, and, moreover, an Irishman—named Macartney, who, after leaving the army, had got into trouble, and was now in terrible difficulties, owing to illness and debt.

Hugh followed the child into a gloomy street, and up a rickety stair into a wretched room, where he found the whole family in the utmost misery. He did what he could to help them at the time, promising future assistance; and perhaps his cheery words did them more good than anything else. He was always a favourite with the men in the regiment, and it was Macartney's remembrance of his kindness which had induced him to send for Mr Moore in the hour of his dire distress. Moreover, his brother's illness made Hugh especially tender just then to all sick men, and his presence seemed to bring a gleam of sunshine into the gloom of that little dark room.

Owing to this incident, it was already dusk when at last he entered the dockyard, for the days were now very short.

The policeman at the gate accosted him with the usual formula — “Where are you going, sir?” — and he answered, “To Admiralty House,” and passed on unmolested. As he said the words, the contrast between his present destination and the abode he had lately visited struck him forcibly, and he pondered on the inequalities of Fortune as he crossed the dockyard towards the house. As he rang the bell, the bluejacket in waiting in the hall instantly opened the door, and across the softly carpeted hall he was conducted to the drawing-room. There was no time for moralising then; for there were voices within, and Lady Katherine advanced to meet him. She was always ready to receive Charlie’s friends graciously, and Hugh impressed her favourably at first sight. He

brought back old days, too, to her mind, when she and his father had danced together through the whole of one London season, and then separated—as people so often are separated in this world—perhaps never to meet again.

Hugh was very like his father, or rather like what Lord Glengarn had been; and so Lady Katherine told him when she got to know him better. There was the same lithe upright frame, slightly but strongly built, the same fair hair and blue eyes, the same straight nose; but the mouth, though similar, varied more in expression: there was the same amiability,—would it be deepened into seriousness, or be weakened into self-indulgence?

The drawing-room at Admiralty House was singularly attractive, and Hugh never forgot how it looked on that first afternoon. It was barely dark yet; and Lady Katherine,

who loved half-lights, had only allowed one shaded lamp to be brought in and placed on the tea-table, which stood on the further side of the room, leaving the rest only illumined by the firelight.

There was hardly a piece of furniture or an ornament which had not its history, from carpets and cabinets down to fans and bits of china. Sir Edward had picked them up in his voyages all over the world. He collected, and his wife and daughter arranged. But the room was not overcrowded: you could walk about in comfort, without fear of throwing down some precious little table at every turn. And then there was another advantage—all the things were genuine: there was no oriental porcelain manufactured at Worcester, nor China screens made at Birmingham, nor Venetian carving from Wardour Street. Sir Edward was a collector, and to some extent a connoisseur, before col-

lecting became the rage; and he was apt to wax wroth with the wealthy ignoramuses who spoilt the market by buying what they knew nothing about.

Two fox-terriers belonging to Charlie were lying on the hearth, while their master regaled them with morsels of tea-cake and bread-and-butter. He had kept his word, and was rapidly collecting a menagerie around him.

But all this time Lady Katherine is pouring out tea, and asking Hugh how he likes Eastport. He was obliged to confess he did not think it charming.

“Well, it isn’t,” she allowed. “Outside the dockyard it is horrid; inside, as an Admiral’s wife, I am bound to think it tolerable.”

“This is much more than tolerable,” said Hugh, glancing round the cosy room, which was not too large to be comfortable, and

yet large enough to contain a great many people without crowding.

“Yes; it is a very good house, with plenty of accommodation for such a small party as we are.”

“Large enough even for a flag-lieutenant,” came from the figure stretched on the hearthrug.

“And it must be large to take in such an important person as you, Charlie, with your extremely numerous family,” said his aunt, smiling. “You don’t know what we go through, Mr Moore, between dogs and cats, birds, fishes, and reptiles. Our lives are made a burden; and I wonder we ever get a servant to stop with us.”

“Holloa, Fan!” cried Drake, jumping up as the door opened. “Come in and support your brother, who is being cruelly slandered.”

Frances entered the room in her riding-

habit, and through the open door they caught a vision of another taller figure, also in a riding-habit; but it did not come nearer, and Frances closed the door and shut it out.

“Here is Charlie’s friend Mr Moore, Frances,” said her aunt, as Hugh placed a low chair for her by the tea-table.

“Were you attacking Charlie?” she asked, raising her sparkling eyes to his face.

“Lady Katherine was attacking his menagerie,” he replied.

“Then I cannot help standing up for you, Charlie, for I do love all your creatures. Come here, Spot, and have a bit of cake.”

“You will make him ill,” said Drake, resignedly; “he’s had as much as he can swallow already.”

“Which means you are jealous of any one feeding him but yourself. Never mind, old fellow, I know yours is cupboard-love; but

that lasts for ever, and is much more sensible than the fancies people take for no reason at all."

"What makes you so late, Frances?" asked Lady Katherine; "and where is Dorothy?"

"The roads were so stony, we couldn't trot,—they always are stony here," she replied; "and as to Dolly, she said she didn't want any tea, and went up-stairs. It is a nasty raw evening, and I think it's going to rain."

"A contrast to Corfu!" said Lady Katherine, turning to her visitor with a smile. "How you must long to be back there!"

Hugh was beginning to hate the sound of Corfu, but he replied politely (wondering all the time whether Drake had told on him) that he had no wish to go back there just yet, and he had almost forgotten to think about it, and make comparisons as to weather, &c.

“I was in Ireland for a week or two, and, if possible, it was worse there than here,” he said. And then she questioned him as to his father, and he told her about his brother’s illness, and found her motherly sympathy so pleasant, that half an hour was gone before he knew it; and when he rose to go, he had been mentally inscribed in her good books, and she gave him a warm invitation to come to a small dance they were giving on the following week.

“You will see Frances then,” she said, deprecatingly; “she isn’t out yet, but I let her come down to our little dances. When we give a big ball, she must stop upstairs.”

“Cruelty!” ejaculated Frances. “I do love dancing; don’t you?” to Hugh, with another flash of her bright dark eyes. And he confessed he did, which crowned the favourable impression he had made.

“He is not one of your languid swells,” observed Miss Frances, in her most decisive tones, when the door had closed upon him. “I like him, Aunt Katherine; don’t you?”

“I told you he was a good sort,” said Charlie, “and yet you seem as much astonished as if my opinion were not worth having.”

“And you mean to say he is engaged to a Greek girl—or a half Greek, which is worse? Impossible!” cried his aunt; “he ought not to be allowed to throw himself away.”

“I never said he was engaged. Don’t you go and tell Miss Harvey that, or she’ll blaze it abroad all over Eastport in no time.”

“I have no intention of discussing Mr Moore with Miss Harvey,” said Lady Katherine, in her most dignified manner, which she was never able to maintain for more than a few minutes together.

So Hugh had been to Admiralty House, and had never seen Miss Nevill after all !

He need not have fought so very shy of it, then ; and he felt rather ridiculous as he thought of his repugnance to such a simple and agreeable call as he had just been making. A pleasant old lady to talk to ; a bright pretty girl to look at—a girl not out of the schoolroom, and therefore not at all alarming ; Charlie Drake to make things doubly easy ; the vision of a riding-habit in the distance, and the sounds of a few bars of a German *Volkslied* coming from some one up-stairs,—and that was all. If he had heard the words of the song, he might have thought them an omen :—

“ Wenn Menschen aus einandergehn,
Da sagen sie auf wiedersehn—
Auf wiedersehn.”

But “ auf wiedersehn ” to what ?

CHAPTER VIII.

“He was my friend, faithful and just to me.”

It was said to be only a small dance at Admiralty House, chiefly in order that tender-hearted Lady Katherine should not feel compelled to keep her pet niece up-stairs; but there were plenty of people, nevertheless—quite enough to make the ball-room look bright and lively—while there was sufficient room for the dancers to enjoy themselves thoroughly. The floor was superb: had it not a character to maintain of being the best in Eastport?—thanks to the perpetual scrubbing and skating of the bluejackets; and what band could rival

that of the Admiral? It really was not a matter of prejudice to say that none of the ships' or regimental bands could compete with it for a moment—in the matter of dance music, at any rate. The bandmaster, a German and a good musician, was a great friend of Dorothea's, and she was for ever discovering music, both old and new, for his men to play; and she took such a keen interest in their performance, that it was not surprising the result was above mediocrity.

On this occasion most of the proverbial Eastport belles were on view, and it might be thought a poor compliment to Dorothea to say she outshone them all. No doubt, in a London ball-room she could have been equalled and surpassed; but here at Eastport, by common consent, she bore off the palm. There was an air of distinction about her tall graceful figure, and the glow of her

deeply tinted complexion was set off to perfection by her soft white gown; while her bright hair, coiled coronet-fashion round her shapely head, gave just the finishing touch to the admirable pose of her neck and shoulders. But if her height was in the abstract a thing to be admired, it was often a source of actual inconvenience to her, and more especially on an occasion like the present. Naval men are proverbially short; there is also a common idea—whether true or false, I will not say—that they are not wanting in assurance: it is certainly true that they are punctilious with regard to the respect due to their superior officers and their superior officers' families. Imagine, then, the feelings of Dorothy Nevill, head and shoulders taller than her cavalier, whirled round and round a ball-room, the cynosure of all admiring eyes! When at length she has ventured to suggest to her partner that

a pause might be an agreeable variety, she catches sight of her cousin, and regards her with envious glances: there was never the slightest fear that Frances Drake would find a partner shorter than herself; but then—consoling thought!—there might be many a partner too tall!

But this night there was something Miss Nevill dreaded still more than a dance with a very short man, and that was a dance with a certain very rich man,—a big star that had lately risen on the Eastport horizon—Sir John Hawker by name. Nobody knew much about his antecedents, or why he had been knighted; but his wealth was very palpable, and was being freely spent for the benefit of the Eastport people, with a reference—so it was whispered—to the probability of a contested election occurring very shortly. The present member was about to retire on account of ill-health; and as parties were

pretty evenly balanced, Sir John would have to fight a hard battle. Meanwhile he was not bribing ; he was only spending his money judiciously in aiding the local charities and encouraging local tradesmen. He had been some time in the place before Dorothea met him ; but her good looks had made a considerable impression upon him, and at the last dance at which they had both been present, he had been more marked in his attentions than she at all approved. It was not according to her ideas that he had been asked this evening ; but by some means or other he had evidently received an invitation, and as soon as she saw him she went hastily up to her cousin Drake, and said in a low voice—

“ Charlie, I can’t and won’t dance with Sir John Hawker to-night. I shall say I am engaged to you if he asks me.”

“ Oh, I say, Dorothea, that’s rather hard.

I shall be awfully busy seeing after every one, and I have lots of engagements already."

"Oh, what shall I do? I can't dance with that man!"

"What's the matter, Miss Nevill? Can I help you?" It was Captain Newman who caught the last words, and saw her despairing expression. She told him directly, and he said, "Won't you let me do instead of Drake? I am hardly dancing at all, and I should be much honoured."

"Will you really? Oh, how kind of you!" and she gave him one of her fascinating smiles, just as she was claimed for the next dance and led off.

After all, the ball was well advanced before she could give Captain Newman a dance and then he said—

"You look tired, Miss Nevill; would you rather sit out, or dance?"

"I should like to sit down very much,"

she said, with the secret thought that dancing was not one of Captain Newman's strongest points ; so he led her out into the hall, where there were delicious wide sofas, really resting-places, and where they could talk undisturbed. But he asked no questions,—he never did, which sometimes a little provoked Dorothea, and tempted her to think he did not take any interest in the little everyday occurrences which were brought so incessantly under his notice by the terms of intimacy upon which he stood with them all ; and then he would surprise her by saying something that showed that his observation was keen enough, and his memory retentive. On this occasion, however, she did not wait for him to begin the conversation, for she felt she owed him some explanation of her somewhat unconventional proceedings.

“ You must have thought me very odd

just now, Captain Newman; and I should never have dreamed of asking such a thing of you, if you had not been so very kind as to offer. I was cross with Charlie because he would not help me. I do hope you do not really mind?"

"I told you," he said, smiling, "that I was only too happy to be of the least service to you. I only hope you will always make use of me whenever you can. My dancing days are almost over, you know; but when you want a——"

"Thank you so very much," said Dorothea; then continuing, with a little hesitation in her voice, "I really could not make up my mind to dance with Sir John Hawker to-night. I do wish he had not come here, —there is something I cannot endure about him."

"I don't much like the look of him myself."

This was pretty strong for Captain Newman, who never expressed his opinions concerning other people; and Dorothea went on—

“No one really knows anything about him, except that he is very rich and has made his money in America. But I must tell you what I did just now, when he came up in his fawning way to ask for a dance. I told him my card was quite full, and introduced him promptly to Miss Harvey. You should have seen his face as I walked away! But Miss Blanche was delighted.”

Her companion laughed and said, “He will owe you a grudge for that snub.”

“I hope he will,” she replied, “and keep out of my way. What is it that makes one take such violent dislikes to people, I wonder?”

“You don’t often do it.”

“Not so often as Frances; and perhaps

I take a little more pains to hide it when I do. But do you think one can tell a person's character at first sight?"

"No, I don't,—at least I think one is often mistaken. For instance,"—and a scarcely perceptible smile stole over his face,—
"I was a good deal mistaken in you, when I saw you for the first time."

"Oh, were you?" cried Dorothea, her eyes sparkling with amusement; "I should like to hear what you thought of me. I often wish I could know the impression one makes on people; it would teach one so many lessons." She spoke quite seriously now, with the peculiar simplicity which was her natural characteristic, and which few people quite understood.

"Do you think you would learn them? Most people would turn up their noses and say, 'How silly!' and go on the same way as before."

“Well, I will try and not say that, if you will tell me what you thought of me. See—I am treating you as a friend,” said Dorothea, instinctively opening her hands, which had been clasped over her fan.

“Perhaps you won’t like it,” he said at length; “but you bring it on yourself, since you wish me to tell you. I thought you were proud, and cold, and reserved, and I had a dim idea that some day you would permit me, perhaps, to touch the hem of your garment.”

“Acting the Admiral’s daughter, in fact?” she said.

“Very much that,—but only till you spoke, not when you—when you opened your lips;” and Captain Newman’s perfectly controlled voice had a little unsteadiness in it, which his companion did not notice. To tell the truth, she was thinking of herself, and not of him.

She answered, after a little pause, "I am sorry I gave you that impression, though; because every one else must think the same, and it is not true, really. I wonder if one can help it? How I do envy people with bright, cheery manners! Frances, for example,—all strangers get on with her directly. She has a knack of putting every one in a good humour. But to go back to reading character at first sight—what would you say of Sir John Hawker?"

"I have not studied him much, but my impression of his face is that of a clever, unscrupulous, self-indulgent man. I have no right to say so. I may be as much mistaken in him as—as I was in you;" and he turned and met her eyes for a moment.

Here Charlie's voice broke in—

"Holloa, Dorothea! I have been hunting for you everywhere. Mr Moore wants to be introduced to you."

Dorothea bowed: the colour that dyed her cheeks might have been deepened by Captain Newman's words, or by the sudden interruption of their conversation; but at any rate, Hugh thought Drake was an uncommonly lucky man to have such a lovely cousin.

By-and-by, however, when the time came for their dance, he found her rather cold and silent, and did not feel inspired to ask for another; whereas he had valse after valse with Frances, who was as light as a feather, and in a blissful state of enjoyment. More than once, his thoughts travelled back to that afternoon on board the Royal Britain, and that curious interview with Clara, as to the results of which he still felt quite misty; but the energetic Flag-Lieutenant did his duty too well to allow Hugh much time for reverie. He found his knee perfectly recovered, and behaved with astonishing

propriety, dancing with all his Eastport acquaintances, not omitting Miss Blanche Harvey.

Hugh stayed, indeed, to the last, and thanked Lady Katherine very heartily and sincerely for a most pleasant evening.

Corfu, after all, was beginning to fade into the dim distance. English girls were very charming: there was nothing, for instance, in Frances Drake to jar on his feelings, in the way that Clara had done so often in minute particulars; for with all her anxiety to please, and constant guard over herself in Hugh's presence, the recollection of various little touches of want of refinement on her part remained unpleasantly prominent in his mind—all the more so, perhaps, because Clara herself had been so unconscious of them.

It was the small hours of the morning before Dorothea and Frances retired to rest;

and whether the lessons next morning were improved by the preceding dissipation, was a very open question. Dorothea, too, was tired, and realised with a groan that after an early lunch she had her usual Friday afternoon engagement—a “mothers’ meeting” to attend.

It was now some time since Mr Johnson, the vicar of a miserably poor district just outside the dockyard gates, had enlisted her services in this way. He had been struck by a certain listlessness and want of vigour about her manner and way of speaking of life in general, when he had first made her acquaintance, and instinctively divined the good it would do her to be brought in contact with the suffering and misery outside her door. Up to this time Dorothea’s life had been a very wandering one ; for the Admiral and his family had never really settled long enough in any place to take

much interest in, or feel their responsibilities towards, their poorer neighbours. Moreover, a man of Mr Johnson's type had never till now crossed Dorothea's path; and she was experiencing, with all the vividness of a first impression, what was practically meant by personal influence. It was new to her to have some one constantly at hand whose standard was so much higher than that generally met with in society, and who was ready at all times to respond to any questionings she might trouble him with, without impressing her with the sensation that she was being dictated to from a platform.

Hitherto her mind had been very much formed on that of her father, who was a man of bright and vigorous but somewhat narrow intellect. Sir Edward was intensely observant, but purely practical. It is true he was fond of theories; but they were generally rather crude deduc-

tions from his own experience than carefully reasoned-out principles. He belonged essentially to the past generation; and the more thoughtful side of Dorothea's nature, with the doubts and reasonings and aspirations which she could not avoid sharing with many others of her own day, received from him no support. Just when she most needed it, she came in contact with Mr Johnson on the one hand, and on the other with Captain Newman, whose thoughtful and somewhat dreamy nature seemed to supply the want she felt, even in her friendship with the cultivated but distinctly practically minded clergyman.

It was not Lady Katherine's way to trouble her head about the extent of intercourse allowable between her daughter and the friends she chose to make for herself. She was far too easy-going to be at all disturbed by trifles, and was so accustomed to the fact of Dorothea's beauty claiming a certain

amount of homage from the sterner sex, that she was not as vigilant as many mothers would have been in her position. It was also tacitly acknowledged that Lady Katherine had never been, and never could be, her daughter's *confidante*. Dorothea's nature, so much the stronger of the two, had always stood alone and fought its own battles ; while her mother was quite content with the terms of perfect good-friendship on which they found themselves—being all the while a little in awe of her, and lavishing her affections on the open-hearted Frances. On this occasion there was nothing to fear on the part of Mr Johnson : he was utterly devoted to his work, and to his work alone. Whether it was equally safe with the sailor, who was generally regarded at Eastport as the most unimpressionable of men, remains to be seen.

On this particular Friday of which we have

been speaking, Mr Johnson came as usual to close the mothers' meeting, and walked home with Dorothea afterwards. They generally found many subjects to discuss in connection with the various parts of his parish from which the mothers came.

Dorothea had been a good deal struck by discovering, quite accidentally, from a woman who had appeared for the first time that afternoon,—a poor miserable-looking creature,—that Mr Moore, the General's new A.D.C., had been visiting her, and was in the habit of giving very substantial relief in the shape of shillings and half-crowns. This was such a very new idea to Dorothea, who had put down her cousin Charlie's friend as a very ordinary ball-room acquaintance, that she could not help coming out with it to Mr Johnson, ending her communication with the *naïve* remark—

“It is curious how much better people are than one takes them for!”

Her companion smiled.

“That is a pleasant lesson to learn, at any rate,” he said.

“But it is a true one, isn’t it? though it is newer to me than to you. I am always feeling it with these poor women, whose stories make one’s heart ache; and they seem to count bearing pain just the most ordinary thing in the world. And one knows how one shrinks from pain one’s self——”

“That’s a dangerous sentiment, you know, Miss Nevill.”

“Dangerous? Why, one can’t help it,” she said; “it is almost a physical feeling.”

“That may be; but our minds act upon our bodies, and we can control our minds. Do you know, it makes me quite alarmed sometimes to think of the softness of every one nowadays. I don’t know what it is all coming to. We could never stand the things our ancestors thought nothing of.”

“Yet in some ways we are braver than even the Greeks were,” said Dorothea. “Do you remember what Lessing says in ‘Laocoon’ about expressing one’s pain?—how the old Greeks were not ashamed to cry and scream for pain; whereas now, no one but a child would think of doing so—at least in any ordinary suffering. What do you think makes the difference?”

“I suppose our ideas on that subject are partly an inheritance from our barbarian ancestors, and partly perhaps the result of Christian teaching—the ‘enduring hardness’ of St Paul, for instance. How people forget that, to be sure! And with all their boasted wisdom, they forget another saying—one I am very fond of, a maxim of the wise man—‘The very true beginning of wisdom is the desire of discipline.’”

Dorothea was silent for a moment, and then said, thoughtfully, “I suppose that was

what the old monks and nuns thought when they scourged themselves."

"Putting it off again on the past?" he said, smiling. "You think the scourgings were rather unprofitable? I am not sure but that they were better in their rather ungoverned desire for discipline than we are in our very ungoverned dislike of it."

"I should have thought, though," said Dorothea, "that the love of discipline was a long way on in the way of wisdom, and not in the beginning of it."

"I don't think so," said Mr Johnson. "Consider a moment what can be done without discipline. Why, nothing worth speaking of. It seems to me that is just the lesson the world is teaching us in these days. We in the Church have dropped discipline—I suppose because we thought ourselves wiser than our forefathers; but look round, and you see

directly how every success is dependent on organisation, subordination, self-restraint—call it what you will. Take a war between two countries. It isn't the army where individuals are bravest which wins the battle, but that where the discipline is strongest. Analyse discipline, and you find it is the submission of individuals to superior will, cost what it may. In an army we all know what it costs—self-denials of all sorts, often life itself. It is a truism to say our life is a warfare. Why, then, do we shrink so from the discipline?"

"I think it would be easier to bear it if it were all laid down by rule, like a soldier's," she replied: "now we have to apply all that to ourselves."

"Yes; and, as I told you, I think we suffer grievously in consequence. But there is another thing you mustn't forget. All discipline, self-denial, trial, is a means,

not an end. Its object is not to make us machines, but to perfect us as individuals—to strain out the dross, and purify us, till we are fit for the great Presence-Chamber. The *same* means are often not good for different natures; and after all, if we are weak and timid in using the rod ourselves, God may take it into His own hands and discipline us Himself. Only, we often bring troubles on ourselves by refusing to use the lighter means He puts within our reach.”

“And do you think that using those means is a help to bearing the heavier trouble if it comes?”

“I am sure of it—just as constant exercise in rowing hardens the hands, or exposure bronzes the skin. A person who has never learnt to deny himself, does not know how to bear it if God denies him the desire of his heart.”

“You think, then, that every one has

some great crushing trouble to bear in their lives ? ”

“ My dear Miss Nevill, that can only be left in higher hands. There is no use in imagining evils, so long as one does not shrink from the pain and trouble when they do come. It always seems to me that no life is worth living that is without pain—perhaps a great deal of it.” Mr Johnson was looking straight before him, and spoke as if he were touching some hidden chord in his own life. They were close to the dockyard gates by this time, and he turned with a smile to his companion,—“ Here have I been sermonising all the way. Now may I come in ? I want to speak to Lady Katherine about a poor woman she has been good enough to befriend.”

Dorothea led the way into the cosy drawing-room. It was a great contrast to the misery she had been hearing about, and see-

ing traces of, that afternoon—this comfortable room, with its warm fire, easy-chairs, and fragrant teapot. It struck Dorothea as it had struck Hugh a few days before, and hung like a weight at her heart. Why should she step into all this luxury and comfort with a sense of rightful possession, while those others outside were in such want and wretchedness? She had not much opportunity, however, for following her own train of thought just at present. Mr Johnson sat down by Lady Katherine, and entirely engrossed her in conversation; while Dorothea found two or three young naval officers had to be entertained, and provided with small-talk—though there was not much need to do more than suggest the latter, as, when once started, they chattered away to her, attacking each other, and laughing at each other's discomfiture, with easy confidence, and friendly reliance on her sympathy.

Presently the door opened, and Mr Moore was announced. He joined the little circle round Dorothea, where last night's ball was the prevailing topic of conversation, and fell naturally into his part with his usual happy knack, making it appear as if he had been as long in Eastport as the rest of them. When the sailors took their leave, he stayed on, with the excuse that he wanted to see Drake. In reality he wanted to study Dorothea. He seemed to admire her more this afternoon, in her simple dark gown, and with her hair a little disordered by the wind,—she had thrown her hat aside when she found she had guests who would keep her in the drawing-room,—than he did last night in all the brilliancy of the ball-room. Perhaps it was because she had thawed a little: he had taken her, as it were, at unawares, coming into the circle of her old friends and joining in their talk; and she showed no signs of

drawing back into her shell, now that she and Hugh were left *tête-à-tête*. Indeed she reverted naturally to what had remained uppermost in her thoughts, and began almost at once.

“I heard of you this afternoon, Mr Moore, from an unexpected quarter — poor Mrs Macartney! She was full of your kindness, and the help you had given them.”

He was surprised and rather disconcerted, and hastened to assure her that this sort of thing was not much in his line; but that Macartney had been in his regiment, and he could not refuse to help him when he heard of his distress.

“Your going to see them pleased them more than anything,” said Dorothea, with a soft little smile playing round her mouth. “It is wonderful how they enjoy pouring out all their griefs into some one else’s ears!”

“It gets rather monotonous,” said Hugh, laughing. “I believe they have told me nearly the same thing in the same words every time I have seen them.”

“Their life is monotonous, I suppose,” she answered. “When one comes to think of it, it is quite extraordinary how very little variety some people have in their lives. That is what Mr Johnson”—glancing across to the other side of the room—“is always saying, and that is why he is always doing his best to give them variety by entertainments and that sort of thing.”

“Is he the parson of the parish?” asked Hugh, following the direction of her eyes.

“Yes—at least of that district. He has been working there ten years—real mission-work most of the time, and the opposition was frightful at first; but he has lived it down. He has just been appointed to an Indian bishopric, and we shall lose him here

before long. I can't imagine how his place will be filled. Of course you have not been here long enough to have heard much about him," added Dorothea, feeling that she was speaking very enthusiastically of one who was quite a stranger to her listener, and that her warm partisanship might be the better for a little explanation; "but we, who have lived six months and more alongside of him, know and feel that there is a master-mind amongst us!"

There was a glow on her cheek, which Hugh noted, as well as the half-deprecating smile on her lips.

"Almost a pity he should go away, isn't it?" said he.

"Well, I don't know; he is very much wanted there too, I suppose. They are crying out for more people to come and teach them."

"It is very naughty of me, I know; but

I have always an idea that the niggers get on very well without us."

"They aren't exactly niggers in India," said Dorothea, laughing a little. "And, you see, there we are already. We haven't been letting them alone in other ways; and besides, I am sure you don't really think," she added, rather anxiously, "that they are not the better for being Christians?"

He did not like to see her look like that, and hastened to assure her that he had only been making a rather silly and very commonplace remark, and then he said—

"I knew a fellow at Eton—a clever chap he was, too—and he went out to Africa or somewhere, and died in no time; and it seemed like throwing himself away, you know, to go to a place like that, where no decent man can live—all to try and convert a lot of wretched blacks, who would never be any good!"

“Perhaps he was making the way for others,” said Dorothea, softly, “like the men who scaled the ladders first. Oh! don’t you think it is fine for people to go out like that with their lives in their hand?”

“It makes one feel awful cowards at home, at any rate,” said Hugh. “It’s a fearful wrench for a fellow to go away and leave all his people, and think that ten to one he will never see them again.”

“Yes. They couldn’t do it unless—unless they cared very much for the ‘wretched blacks,’” said Dorothy, smiling a little. She was opening out to Hugh in a way very unlike her usual mode of intercourse with comparative strangers. Quite unconsciously she had appealed to the best side of Hugh’s nature, by enlisting his sympathy in a cause that was higher than that of common philanthropy, and he was not superior to the

fascination of being treated with such confidence by a woman so far removed from the ordinary type as Dorothea. Surely her confidence was not misplaced.

“And you are awfully good, Miss Nevill,” said Hugh, in that curious tone of assertion which Irishmen use in asking questions,—“you are awfully good, and work for the wicked whites instead?”

She laughed. “I? Oh, I do next to nothing. Indeed part of this district is too bad for me to go to, and I have not much time either. I’ll tell you who is one of Mr Johnson’s great helps—Captain Newman. Have you met him?”

“No,” said Hugh; “who is he?”

“The Commander of the flag-ship: a great friend of ours, if that is any recommendation,” she added, smiling; and when Dorothea smiled like that, you felt it was good to look at her.

“I am sure he would be gratified if he heard you,” was Hugh’s laughing rejoinder, feeling a momentary pang of jealousy for the unknown but highly favoured individual; “but I must really be off if Drake is not coming soon.”

“Hark! there are voices. Yes, it is Fan and Charlie,” said Dorothea, as her cousins made rather a noisy entrance. The appearance of visitors checked their flow of conversation for a moment, but then Frances greeted Hugh with—“Oh, I’m so glad it’s you; I thought it was somebody else.”

“We had just been talking of you, Charlie, and wondering why you did not come,” said Dorothea. “There have been many calls on my teapot, but you are too late to expect a good brew.”

“And to while away the time, Miss Nevill has been telling me of some Eastport celebrities—amongst them your great friend Cap-

tain Newman," said Hugh, addressing Frances, as he handed her some cake.

"Of mine? Oh dear, no! Of Dolly's, you mean. He is a pet of hers, but much too good for me;" and she tossed back her rough hair defiantly.

"Because you are a naughty child," said Dorothea, "and talk rubbish."

Drake and Moore prepared to go out together; but Frances, who looked on Hugh already as a great friend, insisted on making Charlie show him his menagerie—part of which was kept in her schoolroom, much to the unhappy governess's distress; but in spite of many a protest, the creatures somehow remained in undisturbed possession of even the educational sanctuary.

Thus Hugh, almost before he knew it, was established on terms of intimacy at Admiralty House.

CHAPTER IX.

“A dying glory smiles
 O'er the far times, when many a subject land
 Looked to the wingèd Lion's marble piles,
 Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles.

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
 Rising with her tiara of proud towers
 At airy distance, with majestic motion,
 A ruler of the waters and their powers.”

LET us carry our thoughts for a few minutes back to Corfu.

The account which Clara had given of herself in her letter to Hugh was more or less true. She had felt quite broken-hearted when he had left without seeing her again, and only leaving behind him that short note of farewell, which her father had given her, saying shortly, “I promised Mr Moore to

give you this, on condition there should be no further correspondence: you understand my word cannot be trifled with." Clara snatched at the note, carried it off to her room, and cried over it for the best part of one day.

After some days she wrote her answer, and easily managed to have it conveyed secretly to the post-office. But she was listless and languid, and lost her appetite; and Mr Wilson, who watched her carefully, began to be anxious about her health, for he was vaguely impressed with the idea that he should lose her some day, as he had lost his wife. Although he was often abrupt and harsh in his manner to her, Clara had no idea of the depth of his affection. She preferred to measure the extent of feeling by the amount of petting and flattery she received, and resented the want of this outward expression on her father's part.

By degrees, however, this extreme depression wore off;—it diminished steadily from the time when Jack Ward's visits became more frequent. At first she said to herself how much it relieved her to be with a friend of Hugh's, who was not at all averse to talking about him, and whom she could easily persuade to be the secret channel of her correspondence; but the long silence, when her letters never received an answer, and no sign was made whatever by her absent lover, began to disturb, and finally to irritate, her sorely. In the first letter she had written, she had purposely spoken of "seeing Mr Ward very often," in order to excite Hugh's jealousy. If, at the time she wrote, her expression had been slightly exaggerated, in a few weeks' time the facts of the case more than confirmed her words, and before long she was seeing Mr Ward more frequently and more famil-

ially than had ever been the case with Hugh.

The Royal Britain did not remain very long at Corfu; but before he left, Charlie Drake made many shrewd guesses as to the state of affairs, and resolved to give his friend a hint thereof when they met at Eastport. We have seen how Hugh received Drake's well-intentioned remark, and how impossible it seemed then to venture on anything more explicit.

Meanwhile, Ward had never forgotten Hugh's words: "Oh, I'm out of the running. Why don't you cut in yourself?" They were in reality an outburst of disappointment, hardly intended to have been taken seriously, and Moore himself had all but forgotten having uttered them; but nevertheless, they had stuck in Ward's memory.

He began to look on Clara with more

interest — first because of his friend's infatuation, and then on his own account. It was wonderful how all the objections he had made to the idea of Moore's engagement vanished when the case was applied to himself: but then he was entirely his own master, and could do as he pleased; whereas Hugh was tied by the leg.

However, it must not be supposed that this revolution in Mr Jack Ward's sentiments was accomplished without any effort on Clara's part. She wanted some excitement, and with her excitement generally took the form of flirtation. One might have thought that her last attempt at exercising her powers of fascination had taught her a lesson or two, and would have gone far to deter her from making a fresh experiment; but, by long practice, this style of intercourse had become so much part of her nature, that she could hardly have refrained from "carry-

ing on " with some one, even had she wished to do so.

After all, she found it was much easier work to fascinate Jack Ward than it had been to capture Hugh Moore. Jack was made of coarser fibre; and her attentions could be a little more obvious, and her flattery less delicate, without fear of exciting disgust on the part of her victim. The old Consul, on his part, was ready to be unusually indulgent to her after his outbreak of severity: he could not bear to see how she shrank from him; and not having the slightest idea of how much Clara had disobeyed his orders, he hailed with delight any token of recovered health and spirits.

Poor Clara! She was not really happy. This new triumph did not make up for the last defeat. What does it matter to a girl if she has a hundred men at her feet, so long as the one man she wants keeps at a distance?

Sometimes, after an afternoon or evening spent in Ward's society, she would fling herself on her bed and cry passionately—"Oh, Mr Moore, Mr Moore, come back! I hate you for going. I hate you for not writing. I hate everybody. I wish I could die. Come back, come back!"

Meanwhile there had been a week or two of stormy unsettled weather, after which it cleared again; and Ward began to take the Consul and his daughter, together with a few other friends, for little cruises round the islands, or to different points on the Albanian coast.

It was surely the perfection of enjoyment, even to nervous landlubbers, on sunny autumn days such as those were, to skim along the calm sea before a light but favouring breeze; to drop anchor in some sheltered bay, and hear the musical lap, lap of the water against the side of the vessel; to

watch the sun sink in crimson splendour, and the moon rise in rival loveliness, the water reflecting both ; to hang over the bulwarks and gaze into the clear depths of the sea, and tell thrilling stories of sharks seen half a century ago ; and alas ! was not the pleasure of Clara all the greater because Ward was there to do her bidding,—to fetch her cloak and wrap her round (albeit not so tenderly and gracefully as Hugh would have done) in some cosy corner, protected from the wind ; while he left his other guests to look after themselves, and devoted himself to humour her slightest whim and forestall her faintest wish, even to the extent of taxing his skipper's patience to its utmost limit by the contradictory orders he gave him ?

In short, Jack was far more infatuated than Hugh had ever been, and was entirely under Clara's power ; and the fickle little

thing, when her victory was complete, began to tire of her capture—weary of him, that is, by fits and starts, for sometimes she would enrapture him by her gentleness, and then drive him to despair the day after by her coldness and indifference. It was on these latter occasions that she would be dreaming of those golden days when she thought Hugh loved her, while there was still excitement in the uncertainty, and before her hopes had ripened to a momentary fruition, only to be so ruthlessly blasted in the end.

One day in December,—such a day as we seldom have in July—calm, cloudless, with a blazing sun and unruffled sea,—the little yacht lay becalmed a short distance from Corfu. Ward had only Clara and her father on board on this occasion, and they had not been out long before the light breeze died down, and they could do nothing but watch

the sails flap aimlessly, as the ship lay motionless on the oily sea, only drifting with the current in the opposite direction to that in which they had intended to go.

The old Consul was, at any rate, perfectly happy, for he had an unlimited supply of cigarettes. Ward would have been equally content, had Clara only been in one of her gay coquettish moods: instead of this, however, she was silent and rather grave, and Jack thought with despair how bored she must be with the monotony of the proceedings. He did his best to amuse her, brought up books from his cabin, apologising for the misdemeanour of the winds and waves; but he could not win even a sparkle from Clara's half-closed eyes, and she rejected his books snappishly enough, declaring she knew them all before. Poor Jack! he was at his wits' end, and sat sadly on a coil of ropes at her feet, racking his brains to think what he could

find to enliven the dreary waiting-time. All of a sudden Clara brightened up, and asked him—

“How long would it take to sail from Corfu to Trieste?”

“It depends on the weather. A few days ought to do it with a fair wind,” he answered, vaguely wondering what was her attraction to Trieste.

“Is that the way you are going home?”

“I have hardly begun to think about going home yet, I am so happy here. Are you getting tired of me, Miss Wilson?”

“Oh, don’t tease!” said Clara, pettishly; “but tell me, how would you go home if not that way?”

“I might go round by the Bay,” he answered, in a crestfallen tone, “or land somewhere in Italy, and take the train.”

“But you would naturally go to Trieste?” she persisted.

“Well—yes, perhaps.” He was puzzled by her questioning, till a sudden thought struck him, and he exclaimed—“Do you wish to see Trieste? Would you like to go there in my yacht? Could I take you there? I need not tell you, need I, that you have only to speak the word, and I would take you to the world’s end?”

Clara was so much accustomed to these protests that she took them very calmly, and after thanking him with perhaps a little more warmth than usual, she bent forward and said, in rather a low voice and very earnestly, “It is not Trieste I want to see, but England. Don’t you know, I have never been there? and,” with a glance at her father, “I want papa to have a rest. I am sure he needs it; look how tired he seems!”

Jack Ward was completely taken by surprise, for Clara had never before even hinted

at this wish, and now it came out as a long-thought - of plan, and connected with her anxiety for her father's health. He looked up as he was told, and observed the Consul, who was leaning against the mast, smoking of course, with his arms folded, and his eyes gazing dreamily into vacancy—the picture of lazy contentment, one would have said; but his daughter apparently thought otherwise. Ward tried to imagine that perhaps he might look a little leaner and browner than usual, possibly the wrinkles in his forehead and round his mouth might have become a little more marked lately — at anyrate, he would say so, to satisfy Clara.

“Well,” said the young lady, still in an eager, semi - confidential whisper, “if you really do want to do anything to please me——”

“You know I would do anything,” he interrupted.

“Persuade papa, then, to come to England for a change. I know it would do him good.”

“I will try,” said Ward, solemnly.

“He will attend to you, perhaps,” she said, “when he does not care for what I say; and he has been for so long without any holiday, that I am sure he wants one. And besides,” she added, too transparent, after all, not to let her real motive appear through it all, “it is too ridiculous to think of my being English and never having been to England.”

“It is much nicer out here,” answered poor Jack dolefully, his heart sinking at the prospect of a speedy conclusion to such a dream of delight as the past few weeks, in spite of every drawback, had seemed to him.

It was not such an easy matter, after all, to persuade Mr Wilson that his health required a change and holiday.

“Health ! Nonsense ! I beg your pardon ; you are very good,” he corrected himself, as Ward began rather timidly to broach the subject—“I never was better in my life.”

“Your daughter seems anxious about you,” said Jack, humbly. “Don’t you think she—you—perhaps the anxiety might prey upon her, and a few weeks’ rest——”

“Bless me ! anxiety for me prey upon Clara ? How she does take every one in, to be sure ! Don’t you trouble yourself on that account, Mr Ward. It is quite possible she wants a change—I mean, that she would like one. But I have not the smallest intention of going away. I don’t see any reason why I should.”

So Ward was silenced for the time ; and though he renewed the attack once or twice at Clara’s bidding, it was the dutiful daughter herself who was in the end chiefly instrumental in causing the Consul to change his

mind. For that he did change his mind, hardly needs to be said. Clara's persistency almost always conquered in the long-run, and in this case she worked upon him to such an extent, that he really began to think himself ill. "Papa, dear, you look so tired;" or, "Papa, rest—you are looking so poorly;" or, "Every one says you are ageing so fast:" and similar phrases, repeated constantly, produced an effect at last,—and surely there are not many fathers who would have stood proof against such tender solicitude. Clara's system was much like that described by the wise man as a "continual dropping," and in process of time she received her reward.

Christmas passed. "As the day lengthens the cold strengthens," even in Corfu, and January was a stormy, chilly month; but with February came the first signs of spring, and at last, one soft hazy morning, Clara triumphantly lockèd her last box, and watched

it being transferred to the deck of Ward's little yacht.

It was not without some emotion that she left Corfu, for she had a sort of presentiment that she would not return there, although her father made light of all the farewells, and said they would be back in a few weeks. He was not without a half suspicion that he had been entrapped into taking this holiday against his will ; and he would also have much preferred, if he went to England at all, to go by the ordinary service to Brindisi or Trieste. But Miss Clara had set her heart on sailing in Mr Ward's yacht : she liked to feel she had an obedient slave, and she was rapidly becoming more reconciled to the idea of putting up with him, if she could not have Mr Moore ; but before giving in, she must put her fate to the touch, and discover whether, by meeting Hugh once more in England, she could regain her influence over

him. She knew quite well that in the end she could manage to direct her father's steps wherever she chose ; and with Corfu behind her, she felt her secret task at least on a fair way to being accomplished.

But the voyage was not so pleasant as she had anticipated. The fair wind lasted for a day and a night, and then shifted, and they lost much time in tacking ; and then the sea became rough, and the sky hard and grey : the little yacht was tossed about from the crest of one huge wave to another like a shuttlecock ; and, sad to say, the Consul and his fair daughter were miserably sea-sick ! A small sailing-yacht is not the pleasantest place in the world for a lady in rough weather, even if she be a good sailor ; and the result of that week's battling with the elements was to produce a very white and scared-looking little creature, when the news that Trieste was in sight enticed Clara to

mount the ladder and creep on deck. How Ward welcomed her ! But she was too weak and hungry to pay much attention to him, either in the way of encouragement or the reverse. Jack himself had been in his element all the while, enjoying a good breeze to his heart's content, and seeing how near the wind he could sail. Of course he was sorry for Clara, but he did not the least realise her sufferings,—no good sailor ever knows the true meaning of that ghastly word sea-sickness. The fresh north wind seemed to blow away the fogs that had gathered over his brain in the enervating climate of Corfu ; but it did not blow away Clara's fascinations !

It was not without a pang that he left his smart little craft lying at anchor in the Trieste Roads, with orders to come round the Bay at once and report herself at East-port, while he himself accompanied Mr Wilson and his daughter across the Continent.

At Venice, however, he began to wish he had never come, for he was roused to furious jealousy by the same Italian artist whom Hugh had met on board the Austrian Lloyd. This young fellow had made acquaintance with Clara the previous summer and autumn while sketching in Corfu, and, chancing to meet her and her father with Ward on the bridge close to the ducal palace, he at once offered to act as their guide, and conducted them about, first to one sight and then to another, during the whole of their sojourn in Venice.

Giovanni Lega knew every hole and corner in the beautiful old city, and they could therefore have had no better *cicerone*; but what provoked Ward to distraction was, that his ignorance of Italian practically shut him entirely out of the conversation, or at least compelled him to fall back on the Consul—which was perhaps worse, as it left

Giovanni and Clara to a perpetual *tête-à-tête*. He watched how the young Italian's eyes would flash, and Clara's face glow with that rich beautiful colour that no word of his appeared able to produce; and his resentment grew all the more bitter, as he never had an idea of what they were talking about. Such a position is, at the best of times, a somewhat aggravating one; how much more so when the third person is a lover whose patience and forbearance have already been considerably tested! Occasionally, indeed, young Lega, with the innate politeness of his nation, turned to Ward and tried to translate into broken English something he had been saying to Clara—and she would laugh, and perhaps help him out, or more often refuse to do so, in order to enjoy the fun of hearing his blunders; but to poor Jack it seemed as if they had formed a conspiracy to annoy him. He tried to break

loose once or twice, but a kind word or even a look from Clara instantly brought him back to his allegiance.

Neither the Consul nor his daughter knew or cared much about art ; but the calm, lazy existence, floating up and down the canals in gondolas, charmed them both. Mr Wilson smoked, Clara talked—what more did either of them want ? Indeed, once there, the only difficulty was to induce them to leave ; and never in his life had Jack Ward felt more like a prisoner than he did on those soft spring days in the marble halls and splendid churches, or on the shining watery ways of the Queen of the Adriatic.

Worse than all, Giovanni persuaded Clara to sit for her portrait, and from these sittings Ward was excluded. Mr Wilson was present. He did not interfere with the two young people ; but nobody must speak to the sitter

except the artist, and Jack never knew what went on there.

At last, however, matters came to a crisis. The quartette were assembled one evening in Mr Wilson's apartment, which overlooked the Grand Canal. The lights were twinkling below them in a long vista, reflected tremulously in the water; on one side the sunset, crimson and purple,—such colours as Venice only can boast,—was fading away in the west, and a crescent moon was rising just high enough to touch the dome of Santa Maria della Salute with silver light; there was a constant soft ripple, musical and soothing as a lullaby, as the boats passed to or from the lagoon.

Clara and Giovanni were leaning over the balcony watching the scene, and talking in a low voice—so low that Jack, who was walking restlessly up and down and straining every nerve, could not catch a word.

Once he thought Giovanni was saying something about "*Amore*," and even Ward knew what that meant; but at that moment a large gondola passed, lighted with coloured lamps, and some men in it were singing "*Santa Lucia*" at the top of their voices. The chorus over, a tenor sang the next verse; and when the gondola was quite out of sight, the chorus came faintly back—"Santa Lucia! Santa Luci-i-a!" and then a silence.

Ward began to listen again to the low murmur of voices close by, which had not been for a moment interrupted.

"*Che vita!* what a life this is!" said Lega.

"Ah!" sighed Clara; "and to think it must so soon be over. I have never been so happy before."

"Why should it end?" he said, passionately. "Why do you talk of going to

England? You are only English in name, and only half that. Clara! Chiara!—your name is prettiest in Italian, and Chiara rhymes with—can you guess what? *Mia Chiara, mia cara!*”

She was looking prettier then than Jack had ever seen her,—prettier because less self-conscious and self-absorbed. Perhaps Giovanni might have stirred those deeper chords in her heart which Hugh's fingers had first made to vibrate, though he had never brought out the full music. Who knows? They were both children of the South, these two—and Ward felt himself singularly heavy and phlegmatic beside the slight Italian youth, with his dark flashing eyes and soft Southern tongue.

Clara's answer to Giovanni's passionate words was drowned in the sound of a snatch of song, carolled out by a German student down below, who, looking up at the two

figures in the balcony, laughingly turned to his companion, and began Schumann's Gondola Song :—

“Auf zum Balkone schwing ich mich, doch du hältst unten
Wacht.

O wollten halb so eifrig nur dem Himmel wir uns weih'n,
Als schöner Weiber Diensten trau'n, wir könnten Engel
sein.”

Ward did not understand the words, but he saw the gesture and heard the laugh, and turning abruptly on his heel, he confronted the Consul, who was inside the room snoozing over his paper, and abruptly addressed him with, “Sir, do you wish your daughter to marry this Italian fellow?” The Consul started up, walked to the window, and watched the two in the balcony for a minute; then he said, “Don't disturb yourself. I was always having scares that Clara was going to marry this person or that, but it has never come off yet.”

“Don't disturb yourself!” repeated Jack,

bitterly ; “ it is easy for you to say that, but I consider that I have some right to be thought of in this matter. Am I to stand still to be made a fool of ? Your daughter can’t pretend she doesn’t know I care for her. What have I been doing all the winter ? But there ! you know it as well as I do, and so does she.”

“ Bless you, that she does ! ” ejaculated Mr Wilson.

“ And yet you expect me to take it calmly,” continued Ward, his face very white, and with a look in his sleepy grey eyes that could not be mistaken, “ and say nothing, while this Italian boy, whom she hardly knows, and who has done nothing on earth for her, makes love to her in the most bare-faced manner ; and she talks to him by the hour in a language she knows I can’t understand, and won’t so much as look at me.” He was pacing up and down the room

fiercely as he spoke. Outside the night had come down over the city, and the soft summer lightning was playing in two or three different parts of the sky at the same time. "I tell you I can't stand it," Ward went on, "and if *you* don't choose to leave this place to-morrow, *I* shall, and wash my hands of the whole concern. Perhaps you think I have no feelings, but——"

Mr Wilson broke in soothingly—"Indeed, Mr Ward, I am the last person who could think such a thing as that. I am more annoyed than I can tell you at my daughter's behaviour, and that—that you should look upon it in so serious a light. I have had a great deal of trouble, one way and another, with Clara, and I thought I would try what leaving her alone, and not interfering, would do. I see it doesn't answer, and I will do whatever you wish in this matter. I quite acknowledge she is treating you shamefully ;

but, ten to one, she only does it to amuse herself and tease you. I'll order her to marry you to-morrow, if you wish it."

"No, no; not quite so summary as that!" said Ward, diverted, in spite of his annoyance, at the Consul's confession of incapacity in the management of Clara. "Take her away from here—that is all I want—before further harm is done."

"I promise you we will leave to-morrow," replied Wilson; and he was true to his word. When Giovanni Lega called the next day at the hotel, he was told that the party had gone away, leaving no address.

Clara had been too much taken by surprise to offer any resistance; but she vented a good deal of ill-temper on both her companions during the next few days.

A paragraph in the paper which they found at Paris turned her thoughts once more in a different direction.

CHAPTER X.

“Why, what’s the matter, that you have such a February face, so full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?”

THE winter, which Clara had passed in the manner we have been describing, had been a very severe one at Eastport—an “unusual winter,” one would say, if it were not that every sort of weather in turn is called “unusual.” At Eastport, frost and fog formed the staple of conversation for many weeks. The former brought much enjoyment to the young people, who disported themselves daily on the ice; the latter caused much inconvenience to every one, for the packets could not run, and the mails were interrupted.

Charlie and Frances Drake were grand

skaters. Frances blessed the frost for coming in the Christmas holidays, and she would have been out every day, and all day long, if she had had her way; but Lady Katherine was very particular as to chaperons: she could not stand the cold herself, and even Charlie's light duties prevented him sometimes from escorting his sister.

There was famous skating on the moats round the forts, and society became very like a continual carnival on the ice. All Eastport was there—from the Admiral and the General down to the smart young ladies and gentlemen who stood behind the counters in the High Street shops. The company, however, sorted themselves as they do at a public ball, and the different “sets” kept very much apart, eyeing each other critically, but never infringing that mysterious line which English people know how to draw so accurately.

Skating was not Dorothea's strong point,

and she did not possess those buoyant spirits which cold weather serves to exhilarate; but the others used to entice her to join them, and she found it difficult to resist their entreaties—so that it generally happened, whenever she made her appearance on the edge of the moat, that a whole flock of devoted squires were ready to take her in tow, and give her any assistance she might require. But there was no one who inspired her with such confidence as Hugh: he seemed to know by instinct what pace she liked to go, and when she was beginning to get tired; and occasionally he would put her into a sledge-chair, and take her off for a long run, far beyond all the busy crowd of skaters, where the ice was in unbroken blackness, or only marked here and there by a solitary trail of skates. Who does not know the delicious sensation—the keen air whistling against one's face while one is being

propelled forward with swift invisible force, only desiring that the end should never come?

Those were grand times for flirtations. It was said in Eastport that more engagements were announced that winter than had been heard of for years before. The fresh open air seemed more propitious, more encouraging, to timid lovers and startled young ladies, than the heated atmosphere of a ball-room; and certainly the despairing chaperon might watch her charge disappearing hand in hand with the man whom she had been carefully snubbing for months past, and yet would be unable to stir hand or foot (the latter most literally) to prevent the catastrophe she foresaw and dreaded.

But Miss Harvey's name did not appear among the couples who had been made happy on the ice. Some said she was too free with her tongue, and frightened the men away;

others declared she was flying at too high game, but that it was very ridiculous, for every one could see how infatuated Sir John Hawker was with Dorothea Nevill,—and he was so rich, and might very well be my lord some day,—and you could not expect him to look at a girl like Blanche Harvey, without beauty, title, or money.

As for Dorothea, she felt something very like contempt for young ladies who laid themselves out to attract admiration, dressing and talking with the object of being noticed and praised by men—girls, in short, of Miss Harvey's stamp. Oh! if women would only realise that it is they who keep up the standard of manners and morals, and that if, in a general way, they only follow the men's leading, they are but too apt to lower that standard, and debase the tone of society.

Sir John Hawker never skated, but he used to come and look on, and sometimes

even perambulate along the ice (much to the embarrassment of the skaters), with an eyeglass in his eye, carefully supporting himself on his gold-headed cane, in a wonderful seal-skin coat, which he said he had brought from Canada.

One day, almost the last of the frost as it proved to be, Dorothy was not on the ice. It was a Friday, and she had been as usual to her mothers' meeting, and returned just at dusk to find the skating-party congregating in the drawing-room at Admiralty House, eager for a warm fire and tea. Charlie and Frances had brought Hugh back with them, as they often did, and for a wonder Sir Edward had walked to the fort, and they had come home all together. Frances was in high spirits.

"We had such fun, Dolly," she said; "Mr Moore and I had a race, and I should have beaten — shouldn't I, Charlie? — only, just

when I was close to the winning-post I caught sight of——”

“A sealskin coat?” suggested her cousin.

“Just so — and I was so startled, I shrieked.”

“You just about *did* yell,” said her brother; “they must have heard you all over the fort. I wonder they didn’t imagine that the French or the Russians, or some one else, had taken possession of the harbour, and promptly opened fire.”

“I thought for one moment I should have to carry you fainting over the ice,” said Hugh, laughing.

“I should like to have seen you!” cried Charlie. “Fancy Moore balancing himself on his skates, and supporting Fan’s fainting form! He wouldn’t have found her such a light weight, would he, Aunt Katherine?”

“I cannot imagine what there was to be frightened at,” replied her ladyship, rather

sharply; "it seems to me all a ridiculous fuss about nothing."

"It's not about nothing where Sir John Hawker is concerned," retorted Frances, nothing daunted. "I would go to the other end of the world to avoid him, and so would Dorothea."

"I hope Dorothy isn't so silly," said Sir Edward, in his gravest and most decided tones. "To hear all you young people talking, one would think the poor man was guilty of some awful crime. Now, for my part, I like justice, and in common fairness you ought to give a man a trial, and not condemn him offhand."

"It was great fun, though, this afternoon; wasn't it, Mr Moore? To see his face peering round the corner of the fort at us, and then to see his hand coming up to his hat in preparation for that elaborate bow, and then to turn sharp round as if one hadn't seen

him, and know all that was for nothing. Oh, it was lovely! I know what it would have been: ‘How d’you *do*, Miss Drake?’ (well through his nose); and, ‘I see your cousin is not here to-day; I *hope* she is well? What a fine afternoon,’ &c. &c. It is always the same.”

“Frances, you talk too much,” interposed the Admiral. “You forget you are the youngest person present. I think you had better be silent a little more, or go up to the schoolroom.”

Frances blushed violently, as she always did at her uncle’s rebukes, and said nothing; and Dorothy, taking pity on her, said—

“Well, father, it is perfectly true we know nothing against Sir John Hawker, but, on the other hand, we know nothing in his favour.”

“I don’t agree with you, my dear. He is on the right side of politics, and I hear, by

the by, that his chances are excellent at the next election; and he is a most charitable man, and is making very good use of his money."

"And the two facts have nothing to do with one another," said Charlie, in a whisper aside to Hugh.

Just at this moment the door opened, and—Sir John Hawker was announced! There was dead silence for a minute—they all felt so guilty, and had not self-possession to start a new topic as if it were a continuation of the old one. Under these circumstances, an entrance into a room full of people is always a formidable thing. You hear the pleasant hum of voices; then the door opens, the voices cease—every one is listening for your name. If the voices begin again at once, it is a good sign; if not, they have either been talking of you, or you are at least interrupting a conversation you are not meant to hear.

Sir John Hawker did not come through the ordeal very well. He was a man who might have been any age between thirty and forty-five—dark, with a sallow complexion, moustache and imperial, and rather small restless eyes, which were apt to look round the corner at you rather than straight in the face. He was not tall, but strongly built, and dressed with elaborate care, which sometimes, however, failed in producing the desired effect. His whole appearance and style suggested too much effort, too little ease. He was so careful to be polite, that one felt he must have been taking lessons in manners quite lately, and did not yet feel perfectly comfortable in the society of ladies.

Hugh watched Dorothy greet him, and felt she certainly wasted no cordiality on him. That very chilling dignity, that very calm and passive hand held out for him to touch, and then promptly withdrawn, would,

he felt, soon have extinguished *him*; but Sir John only became more elaborate in his bows. Dorothea sank down on an ottoman near the fire, and made a half motion to Hugh to sit beside her; so he brought her her cup of tea, and taking his own, made himself comfortable by her side.

“Have you heard from Cannes to-day?” she asked.

“Yes,” he said,—“good news, I am thankful to say. My brother seems to be ever so much better and stronger, and my father is quite cheered about him.”

“I am so glad,” said Dorothea, with very genuine sympathy; “and now so much of the winter is past, we may get over the rest more easily.”

“Yes; it is a grand thing for him to escape the frosts: not that we often get much frost at Glengarn, but this year I think even there it would have been pretty cold.”

“Is it nice country about your part?” asked Dorothea.

“Well, it’s not exactly what would be called pretty country—not much wood nor much variety, but wide stretches of moor and heath, and bits of marsh,—splendid riding, if your horse knows his way.”

“But rather dreary?”

“I daresay you would think it dreary,—most English people do. I was brought up in it, you see; and when one thinks of the place, one can’t help thinking at the same time of all the fun one has had there—splendid gallops on ponies of different sizes, from one as high as a big Newfoundland, which I remember having as a small boy, right up to a regular hunter: how proud I was, to be sure, the first time I got on his back!” He laughed, and so did she; and he went on—“How funny it is to think of all one’s little bits of ambition! they seem so

awfully grand in the distance when one looks forward to them, and so awfully small to look back on !”

“ Yes, a boy (and a girl too) is always so anxious to grow up, and when they are grown up they regret their childhood.”

“ I don’t quite believe, do you know, in that great happiness of childhood. I don’t honestly think I was happier as a child than I am now, taking things all round. One had less bothers, of course, but less freedom, and I think, on the whole, less enjoyment.”

“ It depends on so many different things,” said Dorothea. “ Of course some children are so badly treated. Injustice makes children miserable. They have such a keen sense of fairness.”

“ Yes, that’s true. And now I come to think of it, I believe you have hit the right nail on the head ; and it was just a sense of

unfairness which used to make me unhappy as a child."

"At school?"

"No; at home. At school I got on well enough. But at home Ion was always the favourite. I believe I was an awful duffer, always in mischief; and he was so much better-behaved, that it was no wonder my mother liked him the best. I came between the two, you see—Ion the eldest, and Nora the youngest, and the only girl besides; so it was always—'Hugh, give way to your eldest brother;' or, 'Hugh, you must give up to your little sister.'"

"That *was* hard."

"It seemed so sometimes—good discipline perhaps," he said, with rather a bitter smile.

It was quite new to Dorothea to look at him in the light of a person who had not always had everything his own way, and it made her feel more interest in him.

“I suspect the real reason why children are supposed to be so happy,” she said, “is that they forget their troubles so soon. However bitter they are at the time, they don’t dwell on them long. I know that is a truism, but it *is* perfectly true, I think.”

“Yes,” answered Hugh, gravely; “and then, you see, they have nothing to be sorry for as regards their own conduct. Of course there are their little naughtinesses, but they are confessed and forgiven and forgotten all in a moment, and leave no traces behind them; while, by Jove! when one grows up, one finds that one can’t even do a *foolish* thing without perhaps having to repent it all one’s life long.”

He was thinking of Clara, though what should have reminded him of her just then he did not know. It seemed suddenly to flash across him how very different this talk with Miss Nevill was to the many conversations he had had with the Consul’s daughter.

He felt as if Dorothea were some superior being bending down from her height to lend him a helping hand—not so much by her words, as by the very expression of sympathy on her pure face, the trust and candour in her eyes. He was not surprised that she did not altogether understand him. No doubt she had nothing to repent of—no folly, still less any sin—and he said as much to her. But Dorothea was shocked, and told him he was very much mistaken—only she did not know whether perhaps he was referring to something in particular, or only talking in a general way of what was of course true of every one.

Hugh was sorely tempted to tell her of the Corfu episode, for he often longed to know what a good woman, who knew all the circumstances, would say of it. Nora had expressed herself strongly enough, but then she was prejudiced; and Miss Nevill, as

an outsider, would, he thought, have been able to take an impartial view. Perhaps if he had known what Charlie had told his cousin in his letter, and the impression it had made on Dorothea's mind, he would have taken courage and told her all the story; but he never supposed she knew anything about it. Dorothea, on her side, often wondered why Hugh never said a word to her on that subject, though he seemed to like discussing every other thing in heaven and earth with her. The fact of his supposed attachment to Clara was never absent from her mind when talking to him; but in the present instance she fancied that perhaps he thought she had gone too far, for he changed the subject rather abruptly by telling her that his sister Nora, with her children, was coming for a short time to Eastport, as the eldest little boy had not been well, and was recommended sea-air.

Lady Katherine overheard the words, and thought it a good opportunity for making the conversation a little more general. She knew Sir John Hawker wanted to talk to her daughter, and that he had been watching Mr Moore with jealous eyes for the last quarter of an hour ; so she seized the first pretext for joining in herself, and Sir John's political discussion with the Admiral ceased abruptly. Hugh raised his voice to answer Lady Katherine, but did not leave his seat by Dorothea ; and the young lady did not address her adorer until he compelled her to do so by saying—

“I was telling your father, Miss Nevill, that I hear a man named Macartney, an Irish fellow whom you know something of, I believe, is a regular stump-orator down in the slums of Eastport.”

“He is a very respectable man,” said Dorothea, stiffly.

“Oh, that may be! I have no doubt any of your *protégés* would be most delightful, charming people; but I only understood this moment from Sir Edward that you had taken him up in your charitable kindness.”

“I have not taken him up. I know his wife a little. Mr Moore can tell you more about him than I can, if you want to find out anything.”

“Mr Moore!” said Sir John Hawker, adjusting his eye-glass for a deliberate examination of Hugh, who appeared singularly unmoved by the honour. Dorothea could not help smiling a little, and Hugh looked at her and smiled too, and Sir John was very much annoyed at this manifestation of friendly intimacy. He saw everything through his eye-glass, or perhaps through the eye which did not wear a glass! But Mr Moore was quite polite, and answered that he should be very happy to give any information Sir John

required as to Macartney, but he had not very much to give. He had been in his regiment for some time, and had rather come to grief, but was on his legs again now. He had been somewhat given to drinking, but, he heard, had taken a turn lately, and been very steady.

“The reason why I ask,” said Sir John, “is that, as I said, this fellow is making a commotion among the poorer people down in the town—Irish eloquence, I suppose! I hear they have started a club, and that he always takes the extreme Radical side, as such fellows would, don’t you know; and my agent tells me I had better look out, for he is getting a lot of influence among a dangerous set.”

“Do you anticipate a revolution?” asked Dorothea. The shade of irony in her voice was a little too marked.

“Upon my word, Miss Nevill, it is all

very well to laugh, but more extraordinary things than that have happened. I could tell you stories of what I have seen—heard, I mean,” he corrected himself — “which would make that seem the most natural and likely thing in the world, by the side of them.” He got a little mixed in his grammar, for his attention was distracted by the entrance of Captain Newman. “Confound these fellows!” he muttered to himself; “they are always hanging about the place.”

There seemed a sort of fatality with regard to these three gentlemen. They were always meeting each other—at balls and dinners, on the ice, and now at an afternoon call. On Captain Newman’s side, at least, it was partly intentional; for since the dance at Admiralty House, when Dorothea had accepted his protection, he was uneasy unless he was somewhere in her neighbourhood when Sir John Hawker was present, and

often went to a ball solely for the purpose of being at hand in case she might require him again. He did not dance much himself, and he was always at her disposal when she wanted a partner—never in the way, but never out of the way either. This could not be repeated several times without Sir John making a very shrewd guess as to the state of affairs, and his feelings to Captain Newman were not those of friendship. You could not have told from Captain Newman's face and manner what he thought of Sir John Hawker; and as he did not talk much, the conversation proceeded as before.

Lady Katherine was speaking to Hugh.

“We met your sister, Mrs Fitzgerald, last year in town,” she said. “How pleasant it will be to meet again!”

“Yes, Nora will be awfully glad,” he answered. “She was talking to me about you when I went home. Her husband,

Willie Fitzgerald, is out shooting somewhere in the Rocky Mountains, but she expects him here before very long. He is always out in those parts. Savage people seem to have a fascination for him."

"You can hardly call the United States savage, Mr Moore," remonstrated Lady Katherine, with a half glance at Sir John Hawker, who was looking at Hugh with a very curious expression on his face. He had quite dropped the thread of what he was saying, and was listening intently to Mr Moore.

Hugh did not notice him at first, and answered Lady Katherine lightly, "Well, the States are hardly savage, perhaps, till you get 'Frisco way. Then you meet with some curious specimens of humanity, I imagine. What do you say, Sir John?"

He looked up as he spoke, and was astonished himself at the black look of mingled

anger and terror, which made the American appear positively repulsive for a moment; but Sir John recovered himself immediately, and said with a short laugh, "Is that what your brother-in-law Fitz—what's his name?—tells you about America? Really, don't you know, I am not an American. My father was English, and I was born in England; and, as it happens, I am not acquainted with 'Frisco, as you call it, and can't tell you much about the natives. But perhaps I had better be going, since we are in such bad odour." And he made his adieux rather hurriedly, hardly noticing Hugh's offered apology.

There was a general murmur of surprise when he was gone, and Hugh felt bound to express his regret to Lady Katherine that his remarks should have offended her visitor, which was, of course, the last thing he had intended. "But on my honour," he said,

“to look at the fellow, you would have thought I had accused him personally of some crime. He positively glared at me. I didn’t know a human being could look so ferocious.”

“Let us turn the conversation,” said Dorothea; “he is not a pleasant subject to discuss.”

Captain Newman was ready to fill up the breach. He said he had a new piano in his cabin which he was anxious Miss Nevill should try. Would Lady Katherine and her daughter come to tea with him one day as soon as the frost broke up?

The ladies both said they should like it of all things; and Hugh asked—rather wistfully, the Commander thought—if his were a “show” cabin, full of curiosities, like some he had seen on board men-of-war.

“Oh, nothing much,” said Captain Newman. “I have only a few little things I

have picked up. But will you come and have a look at them? Come to tea the same day; I will let you know when Lady Katherine has fixed the time."

Hugh "accepted with pleasure," and then the two officers took their leave.

"There is something uncommonly fishy about that fellow Hawker," said Moore, as they walked through the dockyard together.

"I have often wondered what his history is," said Captain Newman. "One sometimes does a man injustice; but certainly his expression to-night was most peculiar."

"So it was; and such an awfully sudden change! He was all right a minute before; and if he isn't, strictly speaking, a Yankee, all the world knows he has lived out there pretty well all his life."

"Talking of changes," said Captain Newman, "look at the moon. That means a thaw."

The moon had, indeed, that ominous ring of vapour around it which always precedes rain. But Hugh was not much interested just now in the state of the atmosphere, and he only said—

“No more skating, then. I say, Newman, it will be an abominable shame if such a girl as she is should be sacrificed to that fellow.”

“Oh, I hope it won't come to that. Miss Nevill has a will of her own, and I hardly imagine her parents would force a marriage on her.”

“I can't conceive how people like Sir Edward and Lady Katherine should care to have a man like Hawker about the place at all.”

“He is very rich, I believe.”

“Bother his riches! I do think money is the greatest curse that ever was invented.”

“So it is, very often; but one can hardly

get on without it," said the older man. "The *love* of money is likely to be the ruin of England, I think. Well, here's my moralising cut short by the stairs. My boat is waiting, so I must not stop. Good night to you."

Hugh watched the firm, vigorous strokes of the sailors till the boat was lost in the darkness, and then turned and went home—not in the happiest or most contented frame of mind. Sir John Hawker's presence at Admiralty House disturbed him very much. True, Dorothea disliked him; but then one could never tell—— Ah, Mr Moore! Did you never ask yourself why you were taking such an interest in Miss Nevill's future?

The next day Captain Newman's prediction was fulfilled. The frost broke, and very rapidly the ice melted, and Eastport was plunged into all the horrors of a thaw. The roads became almost impassable, for the

snow which had fallen weeks before had not been properly cleared away, and it was with many inward groans that Hugh wended his way through the mud and slush from his rooms to the General's house. But his thoughts were diverted from the miserable appearance of the outside world by a curious and unexpected encounter with a former acquaintance. He was walking down the High Street, when he was suddenly accosted by a gentleman on the other side of the road; but not recognising him, Hugh was about to pass on, when the stranger hailed him by his name, and began to cross the road towards him.

“How do you do, Mr Moore?” he said; “you don't recollect me.”

Hugh now remembered having seen him somewhere, though where, he could not think, and answered, “I know your face, but I'm afraid I can't put a name to you.”

“The last time I saw you, you were very much engaged in entertaining a pretty little girl.”

“A pretty little girl! That doesn’t help me much.”

“Too frequent an occurrence, eh? Don’t you remember your voyage in the Austrian Lloyd?”

“To be sure I do! Mr James,” cried Hugh; “what an idiot I am! I beg a thousand pardons.”

“No reason to,” returned the correspondent of the ‘Radical Mercury.’ “I was the last person you expected to see here, no doubt. Now guess my business. What do you imagine brings me to this part of the world?”

“Picking up more information on the Eastern Question?” asked Hugh, laughing.

“Not a bit of it. Something much more magnificent—at least from your point of

view. From mine, of course, nothing is grander than discovering Truth, wherever she can be found."

Hugh had not seen Mr James before in such a jocular frame of mind, and wondered what had put him in this high state of good humour; so he answered lightly, "They say Truth is to be found at the bottom of a well, and from my experience you have got to dig a good bit below the bottom of a newspaper to find her! However, if your business is *not* searching for hidden treasure, I give up guessing."

"I shall startle you, I am sure. What do you say to my fighting Sir John Hawker?"

"I shall be heartily glad if you beat him," said Hugh, incautiously.

"I congratulate you on your conversion," exclaimed Mr James; "may I ask what has changed you?"

"Oh, I don't know that I am much

changed in a general way. What made you think of contesting Eastport?"

"I didn't think of it at all. We do as we are told in politics, just as you do in military matters. No discipline, no success; that's our motto."

"And uncommonly well it answers. So the people in the North sent you?"

"Yes. I am here as the political-economist candidate; and from what I understand, I don't think I shall have *great* trouble in overthrowing my antagonist in that line."

"Well, I should not think Sir John Hawker is much posted up in political economy."

"I tell you what," said Mr James, confidentially, "since you were good enough to express hopes for my success, I may venture to tell you—*entre nous*—that he is about as bad a candidate as the Tories could

well have chosen. I hear, by the way, that these same Tories have great difficulty in getting men to stand at all. The young sparks won't take the trouble, and they don't somehow much relish coming down—as they consider it—to working men.”

“You see, the discipline in the Conservative camp's faulty,” replied Hugh; “the men don't do as they are told.”

“Bad management!” said the Radical.

“No doubt; and bad management in the House, too, where a gentleman can no longer sit in comfort and be treated like a gentleman.”

“Like a fiddlesticks!—begging your pardon. There you are at it again, with your aristocratic prejudices. You fine gentlemen will have to learn a few lessons within the next year or two, I can tell you.”

“We are learning them fast enough in Ireland, at any rate,” said Hugh, good-

humouredly. He did not at all mind plain speaking, and Mr James amused him. "But to go back to Hawker: why is he such a bad candidate?"

"In the first place, he is an alien, or next door to one. Of course he is not a Yankee, or he couldn't stand; but he is generally looked on as an American by the people here, I find, and he talks through his nose like a born New Yorker. In the next place, he is a very bad speaker: he has few ideas, and no notion of expressing those he has. Then he is quite a new man, and the county people only give him a very half-hearted support. And last, but not least, he is a deal too free with his money—and we shall catch him tripping there, or I am much mistaken."

"Perhaps, as you know so much about him, you could tell me something of his history?"

“There I can’t help you much. They say he keeps it dark. I know this much—he is a Cockney born. His father was a City clerk, or something like that, and went out on spec to some mines in the States—where, I don’t know, but I fancy out West somewhere. He made a fortune there, or his son did after his death; and then Sir John Hawker came back, and was knighted for some reception of the Prince of Wales, or something—I forget what. Then, don’t you know, naturally your moneyed man wants to get into ‘society,’ as you are pleased to call it, and looks about for a suitable place in the country, buys it, builds a big house—and there you are! The next thing is to stand for Parliament, of course. Once in the House, and writing M.P. after your name, no one can say much to you.”

“I think that theory is evaporating, to-

gether with most of the other advantages of being in the House—that, for instance, of being in an assembly of gentlemen, as I said before, when you laughed at me so unmercifully. When M.P. meant what it used to mean, it was something to be proud of, if you like; but now I wouldn't give that for it!"—and he snapped his fingers.

“That is just what I was saying. You young fellows, who ought to stick to your guns and make a good fight of it at least, get disgusted and run away, because you think your adversaries aint dressed quite in the fashion, or maybe have a few unpleasant odours about 'em. Well, it will be your own look-out if you are driven from your ground ignominiously, and that pretty soon too. I am sorry for it—upon my word I am. I like a good fight, and it is demoralising to any party to get too easy a victory.

And, after all, when you talk of the honour and glory of being an M.P. in the old days, what was there so specially honourable in being returned by a handful of drunken boors, voting according to their landlord's orders? It only meant a few hundreds or thousands of pounds in hard cash down, that's all."

"And did you not yourself say Sir John Hawker was bribing, or as good as bribing, now? In the old days it was above-board, and there was no shame in it; now it goes on just as much, but you add a lie to it. I had rather by a long way have been returned for a pocket borough than a constituency like this, where the voters don't really know much more about it, and where they want their minds inflamed by party oratory, or their pockets made hot, or both, before they will take enough interest in it to vote one way or another."

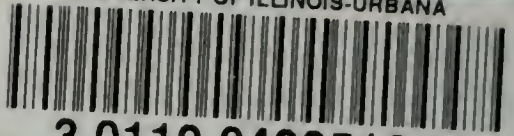
“Come, come, my dear Mr Moore!—fairness and truth, if you please. I see your conversion has not advanced very far yet. You must come to one of my meetings, and see if the people care one way or the other. And mind you, if Hawker bribes, we shall be down on him—no fear. I must leave you now and go to my committee meeting. I go up to town to-night, but am back here to-morrow. We can’t yet get the old fellow to accept the Chiltern Hundreds and have done with it; but he may do it any day, so we must be prepared, and I am busy canvassing. We shall meet again soon;”—and, with a friendly salute, the Radical candidate hurried down a side-street, full of importance and self-contentment.

“He is about right in saying he enjoys a fight,” thought Hugh, “but he likes still better being a prominent personage and

constantly before the public. And yet he is no fool. I shall bless him if he thrashes Hawker. I wonder whether Miss Nevill takes any interest in the election?"

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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